



Everything you need  
to know about...

# Charismatic™

BOOK







Direct Edition  
by - **KHARY RANDOLPH**  
& - **EMILIO LOPEZ**

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

During one fateful performance, Las Vegas magician Hank Medley discovered that everything he thought he knew about magic was dead wrong, as he accidentally caused every person in Vegas to disappear. Soon, he would discover his cat Sparkles could speak, and that he was at the center of a centuries-old war between magic's most powerful forces, as told to them by their new ally, a beautiful Druid named Sudana. He would also lose his girlfriend, Alle Star, and mentor Hector in the process.

Hank, Sparkles and Sudana eventually encountered the cause of the vanishing--Samsun, a deadly magical being returned from the dark realm known as the Void Realm. Together with the aid of the wizard, Kon, they eventually vanquished Samsun after a deadly battle of wills. However, his arrival was merely subterfuge for the Void's overlord, the evil shaman Serké.

With a portal now open, Serké unleashed the Void's most gruesome creatures into the Earth realm led by Hank's former loved ones, Hector and Alle. During the ensuing war, the shaman managed to pierce Kon's chest and unleash his magic into the world. Meanwhile, Hank, Sparkles and Sudana journeyed to the Golden Realm to flee Serké's forces, and managed to rescue Hector and Alle. Yet the cost was high, as Hank, Sudana and Sparkles' lives remain in upheaval, and the dark forces of magic now roam free in the shadows of society...

## CHARISMAGIC THE MAJOR PLAYERS:

### Hank Medley



Hank Medley thought his life as a Las Vegas magician and performer was tough, but he had no idea what the cards truly had in store for him. After managing to accidentally vanish the entire human population, Hank quickly learned that his pet cat Sparkles could speak, and soon the pair found themselves on an adventure to stop an ancient evil, Samsun, and save the world! In the process, they befriended a Druid named Sudana that helped shed light on Hank's inherent ability to vanish great distances and even span time! Hank and Sudana quickly fell for each other, and along with Sparkles, the trio has managed to save the world on many different occasions (See Aspen titles: Charismagic Volumes One and Two and Aspen Universe: Decimation).

### Sparkles



Sparkles began her life as a feline in the wild until it was discovered she had magical powers, and was soon exiled from her family by her mother in order to protect her other siblings. Sparkles soon found her way to the inner city and eventually was rescued by Hank Medley, a down-on-his-luck street hustler. She would become Hank's pet as he rose to stardom as a Las Vegas magician, and eventually revealed her magical abilities to Hank following his accidental vanishing of the world's population. She accompanied Hank on his quest to save said population and later into the Golden Realm. Recently, Hank and Sparkles helped save the world from the threat of Orlana, the Death Princess (Aspen Universe: Decimation).

### Samsun



The ancient being known as Samsun has lived thousands of years and has the powerful ability to absorb others' magic in order to strengthen his own. In ancient times, Samsun was recruited by the wizard Kon in order to defeat the Death Princess and steal her powers. Yet, her magic was too tempting, and Samsun was betrayed by Kon's clan of wizards known as The Order after they witnessed his temptation come to fruition. They sentenced him to a life in the Void Realm, a prison realm for dark magical beings. However, in the Void, Samsun encountered the deadly shaman Serké who used his own magic to teach Samsun how to return to the Earth realm by using human's life forces to channel his departure. Upon his return, Samsun was the true reason for the vanishing and it took the combined might of Hank and his allies to eventually subdue and trap Samsun in the Wall of Trapped Souls.

### Sudana



Sudana is a magical druid capable of seeing all magical beings via a network of interconnected life forces. She has accompanied Hank and Sparkles on their various quests and also has aided the wizard Kon at times. Sudana was recently kidnapped and tortured by Orlana, the Death Princess, and used as a conduit to identify and locate various powerful magical beings in order to control them. She was freed and now continues her own mission to maintain the balance of magic in the world.

### Serké



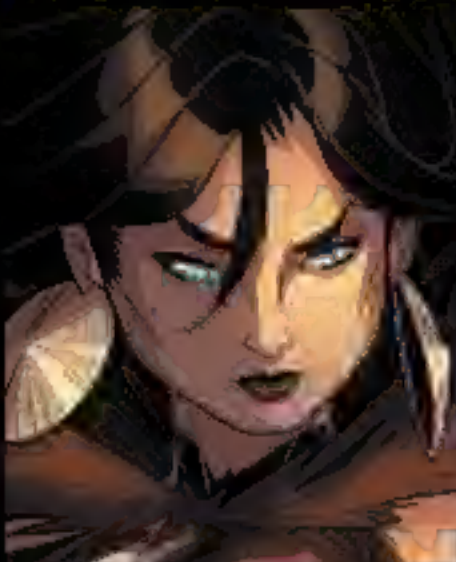
The shaman Serké once served as a faithful ally to the warrior Kon, until he was betrayed in battle by his friend and left to die in the clutches of the Death Princess, Orlana. However, she was attracted to Serké and allowed him to be her top lieutenant and partner. But Kon returned to wage war on his old ally and soon overwhelmed Serké in combat, sending him into the Void Realm rather than killing his old friend. In the Void Realm, Serké learned the art of dark magic and became the ruler of the sinister otherworld. He has since trained Samsun as his protégé and returned to Earth several times to unsuccessfully murder Kon, along with Hank, Sudana and Sparkles.

### Kon



The wizard Kon grew up to become a great warrior that attempted to oppose the tyrannical reign of Orlana, the Death Princess. However, losing in battle, Kon abandoned his chief ally, Serké, and fled to a void realm consisting of no matter or life. Eventually, Kon would channel his magic to create life itself, and return to Earth leaving the Void Realm to evolve on its own. Back in the Earth Realm, Kon assembled a team of powerful magical beings, including a young Samsun, and collectively they defeated Orlana—but not without great cost—as Samsun eventually succumbed to the temptation of his own powers. Kon and his allies decided to form The Order, a group of wizards that would work to preserve the sanctity of magic. Their first decision was to banish Samsun to the Void Realm, as his magic was thought to be too dangerous to exist on the Earth Realm.

### Orlana



The Death Princess was born with a single purpose—to rule everything in her path. In her early years, she quickly took over her own village and eventually created a kingdom built on the back of her slaves. Eventually, the wizard Kon—with the help of Samsun's powerful magic—defeated and enslaved her in a work camp. She has since encountered the shaman Serké and lived far beyond her years using his magic.

*Charismagic created by Vince Hernandez*

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"OUR SCRIPTURES TELL US OF A TIME AND PLACE WHEN THIS WORLD BELONGED TO US, WHEN WE COULD ROAM FREE OF PREJUDICE."

"SUPPOSEDLY, THERE WAS PEACE."

"BUT IF I'VE LEARNED ONE ABSOLUTE IN MY STUDIES OF OUR PASSAGES..."

"...IT'S THAT PEACE IS NEVER CONSTANT."

"THE PAGES REFER TO HIM AS... SAMSUN."

"HIS MAGIC WAS MORE A CURSE IN HIS YOUTH. HIS ACTIONS WERE NOT OF MALICIOUS INTENT THEN. NO, THEY WERE FOR SURVIVAL-- AT FIRST. BUT EVENTUALLY, THOSE UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE IN HIS SHADOW WERE TAKEN BY HIS DARKNESS."



"WITHOUT FEASTING ON OUR KIND, ON OUR MAGIC, HE COULD NOT SUSTAIN HIS LIFE FORCE."

"BUT EVENTUALLY... HE CAME TO ENJOY IT."



"HE WAS DEEMED TOO DEADLY TO LIVE AMONGST THEM..."



"...AND IN THOSE TIMES, AS I'M SURE EVEN YOU BOTH ARE AWARE OF, A COLLECTIVE FEW RULED OVER ALL. THE DECISION WAS THEIRS."





"THE ORDER OF FIVE WERE LEFT WITH NO CHOICE BUT TO IMPOSE BANISHMENT UPON HIM..."



"...TO THE VOID REALM."

"THE REALM, A PLACE EVERY ONE OF US WHO BLEEDS MAGIC HOPES TO NEVER EXPERIENCE. IT'S DESCRIBED AS MYTH IN OUR WORDS BECAUSE WE WISH IT WERE SO."

"TRAPPED WITH THE VERY WORST OF OUR KIND, IT IS A CONFINEMENT ONLY THE ORDER WOULD DREAM OF USING."



"YET, THEIR SOLUTION TURNED OUT TO BE A NIGHTMARE."

"WITH ALL THEIR INFINITE WISDOM, THE WIZARDS FAILED TO FORESEE THE INHERENT DANGER IN A BEING AS VILE AS THIS. HIS MAGIC WAS A NEW FORM OF DARKNESS, AND IT CLOUDED THEIR JUDGMENT WHEN THEY DECIDED HIS FATE."



"A BEING SUCH AS SAMSUN SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN BANISHED. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN EXTERMINATED."

"INSTEAD, HE WAS LEFT TO HIS OWN DEVICES."



"CENTURIES PASSED.  
SAMSUN GREW OLDER,  
STRONGER-- WISER.

"HIS RETURN  
WAS INEVITABLE."







DO YOU  
BELIEVE IN  
MAGIC?



9 P.M.

ARE YOU EAGER  
TO TRANSCEND THE  
TRAPPINGS OF  
YOUR REALITY?

TO DISCOVER A  
MYSTIC FORCE GREATER  
THAN ANYTHING YOUR MIND  
COULD **POSSIBLY** IMAGINE,  
OR COMPREHEND-- YET  
YOU **STILL BELIEVE?**

BECAUSE IF  
YOU DO...



...THEN  
**FREE** YOUR  
IMAGINATION...



...AND  
**PREPARE**  
YOURSELVES  
FOR...



...THE  
**INCREDIBLE!!!**





STONEHENGE.



SOOO, IT'S  
JUST A BUNCH  
OF ROCKS?

IT'S NOT  
JUST A BUNCH  
OF ROCKS! IT'S  
HISTORY.

WELL WITH  
THE LONG RIDE  
OVER, I GUESS I  
WAS EXPECTING  
MORE.

MORE? NOBODY  
CAN EXPLAIN HOW THESE  
ENDED UP HERE. IT'S  
MIRACULOUS. IT HAS TO  
MEAN SOMETHING,  
DON'T YA THINK?

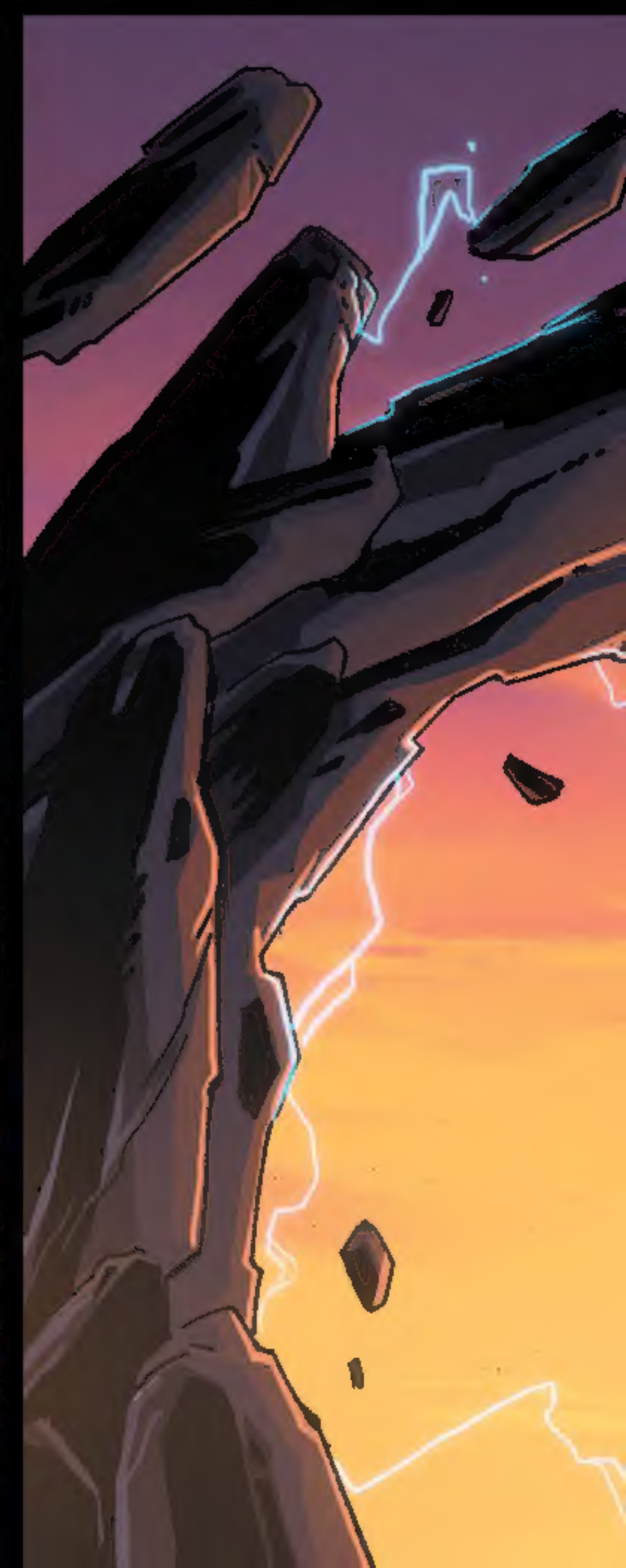
CRAZY...

I KNOW,  
RIGHT?!

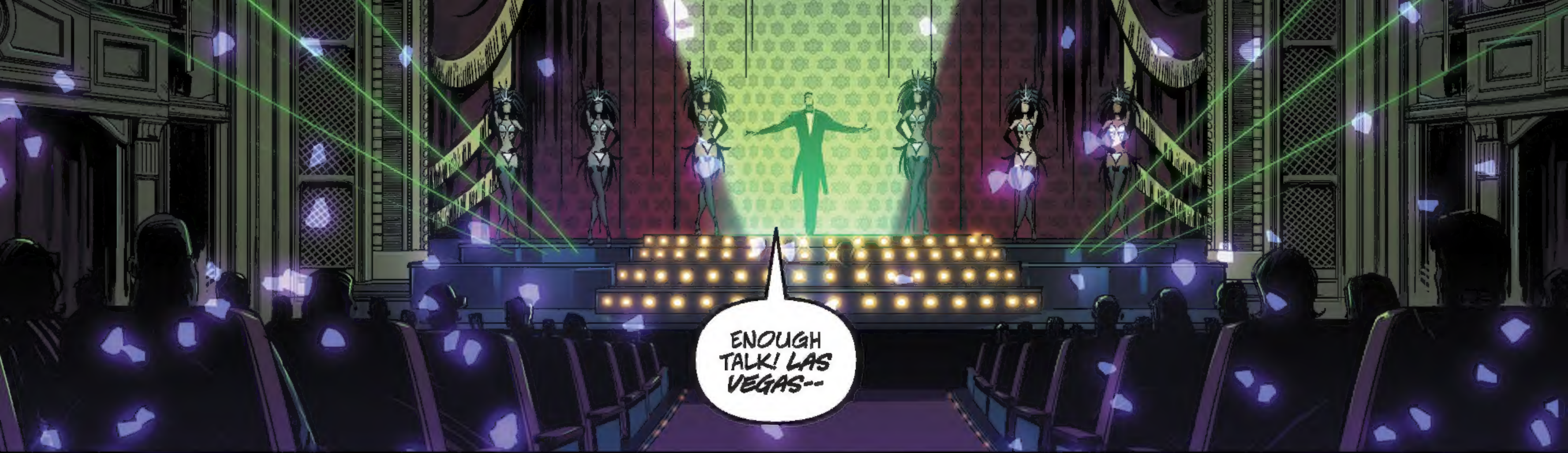
NO... TURN  
AROUND.

I THINK  
WE SHOULD  
LEAVE--  
NOW.

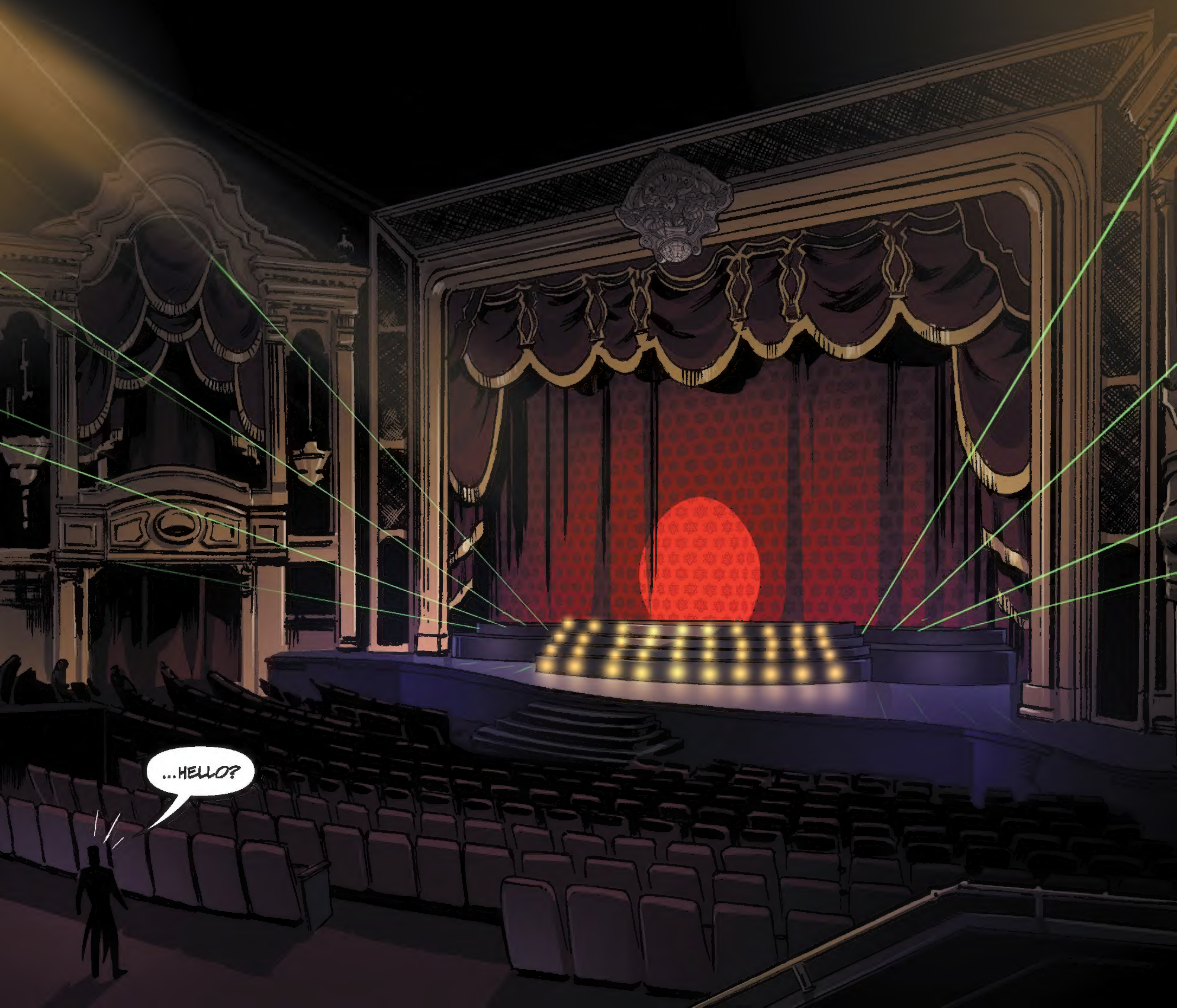
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AT  
LAST...

BA-DOOM

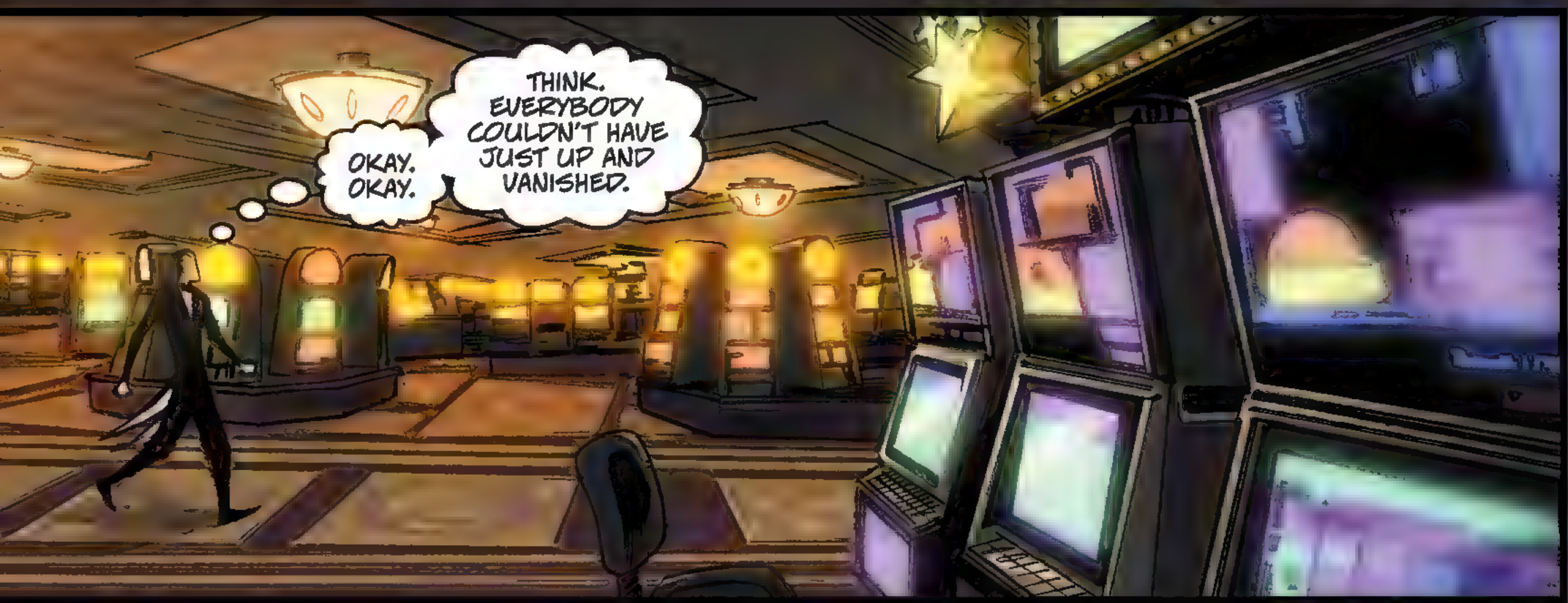
















--DOWN  
HERE.

I THINK IT'S  
TIME WE HAD  
A TALK.

READ MORE IN THE PAGES OF

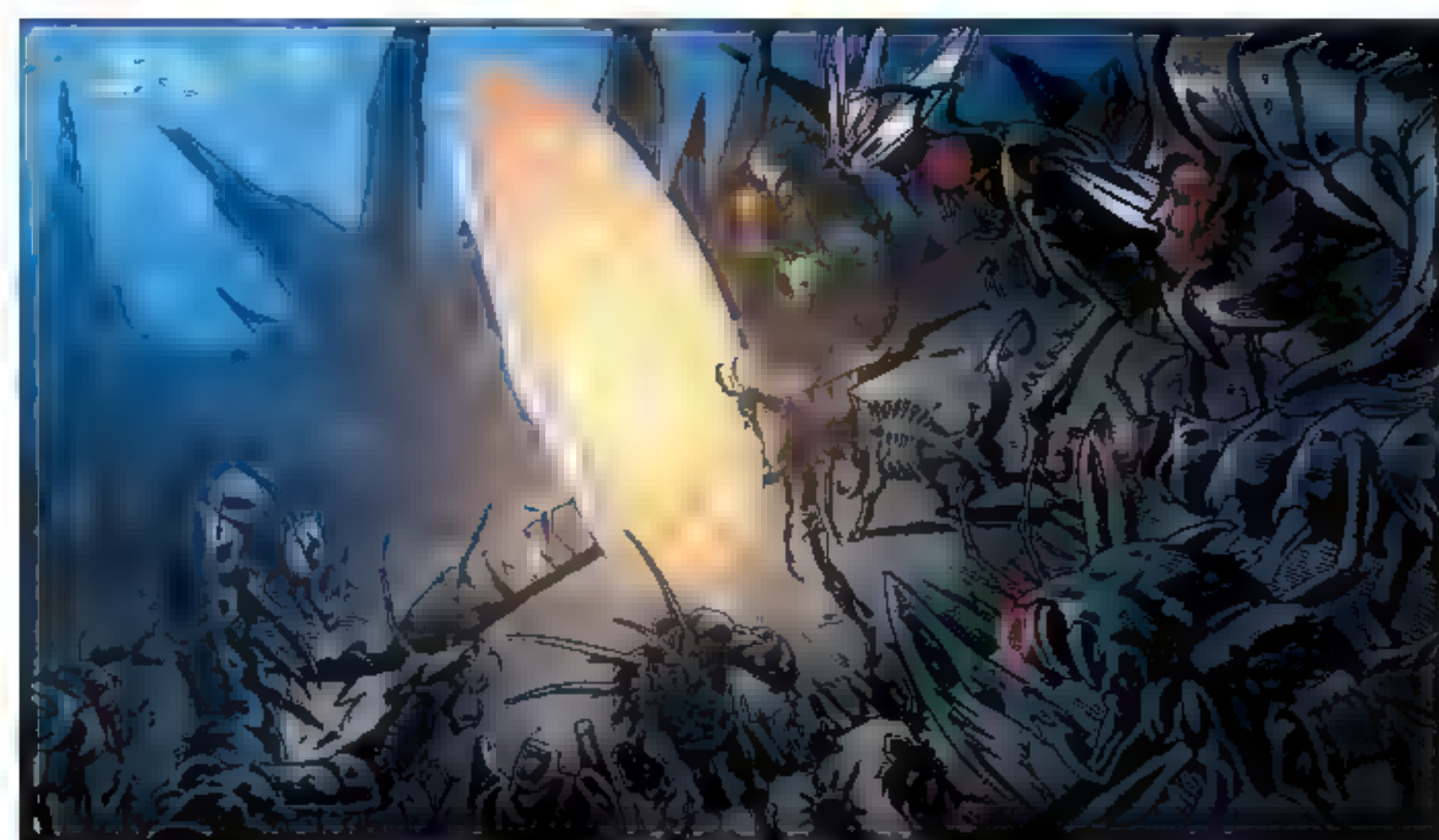
**Charmagic**

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## "The Golden Realm"

Hank, Sudana and Sparkles were under the impression they had vanquished the threat posed by Samsun during the final battle within Kon's temple in Costa Rica. During the onslaught, Samsun was imprisoned within the wizard's Wall of Souls, his own personal confinement for dark magical beings. However, the trio soon discovered that Samsun's assault on the Earth Realm was only the opening salvo for a much larger invasion led by the shaman Serké's forces of destruction.

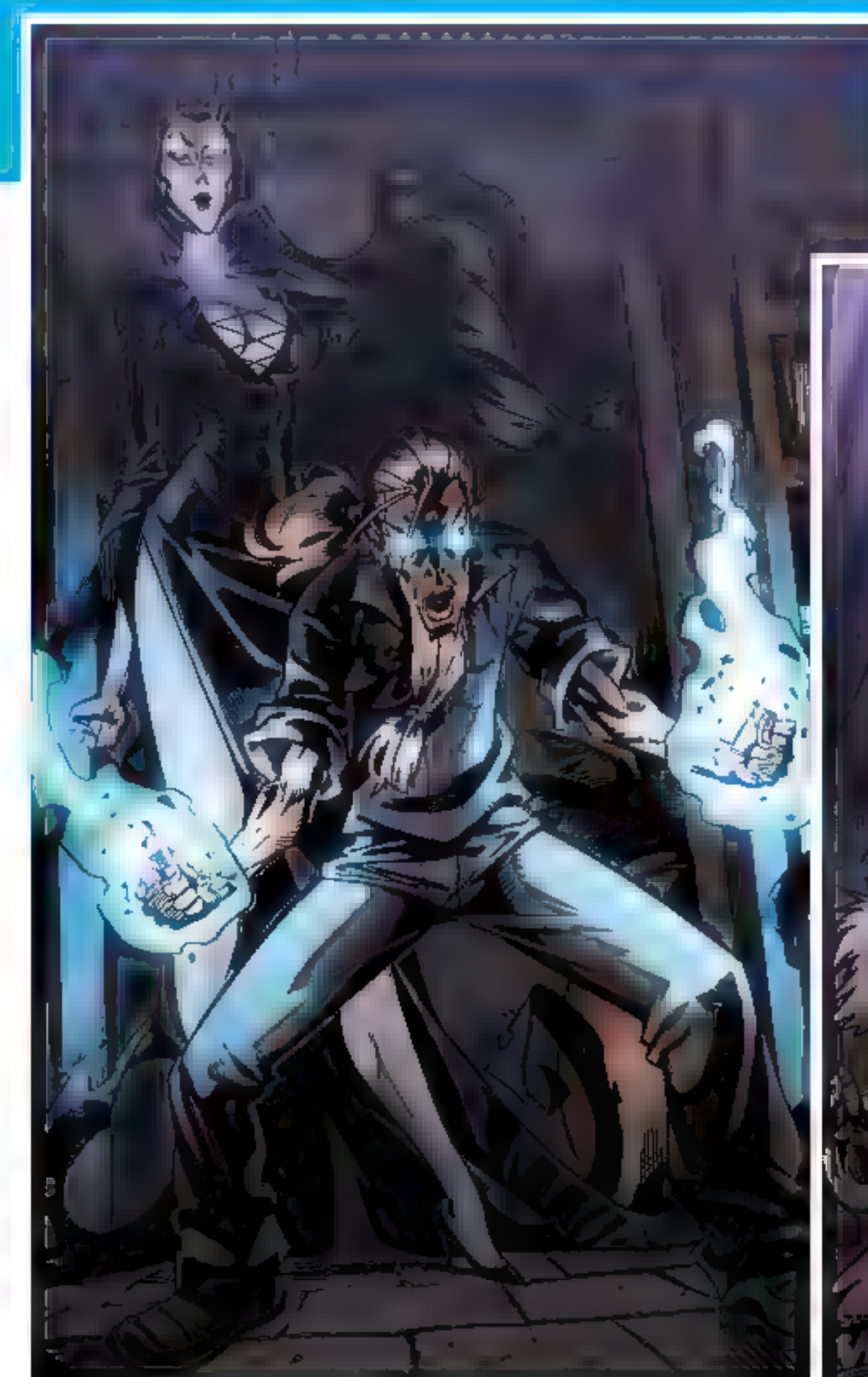
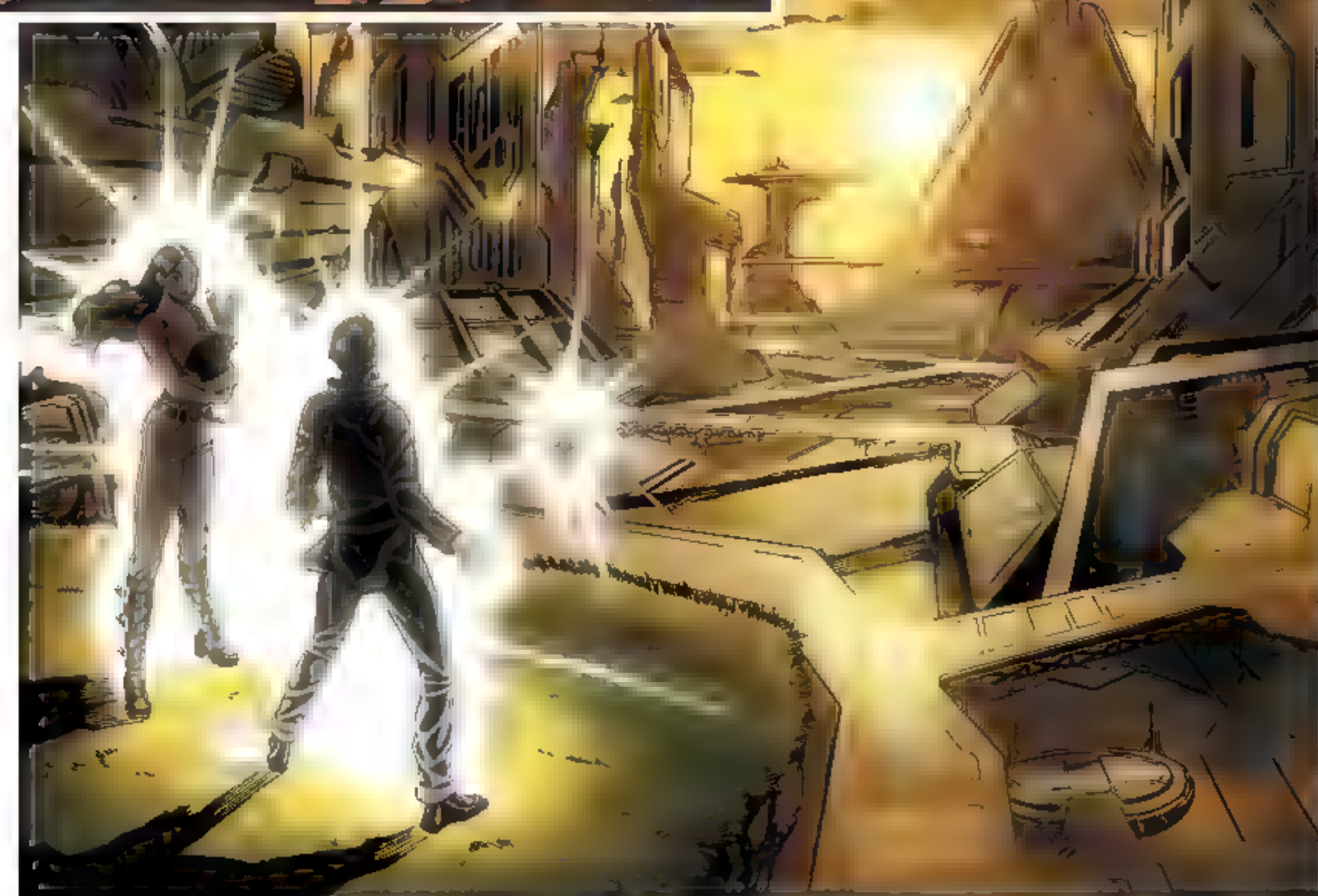
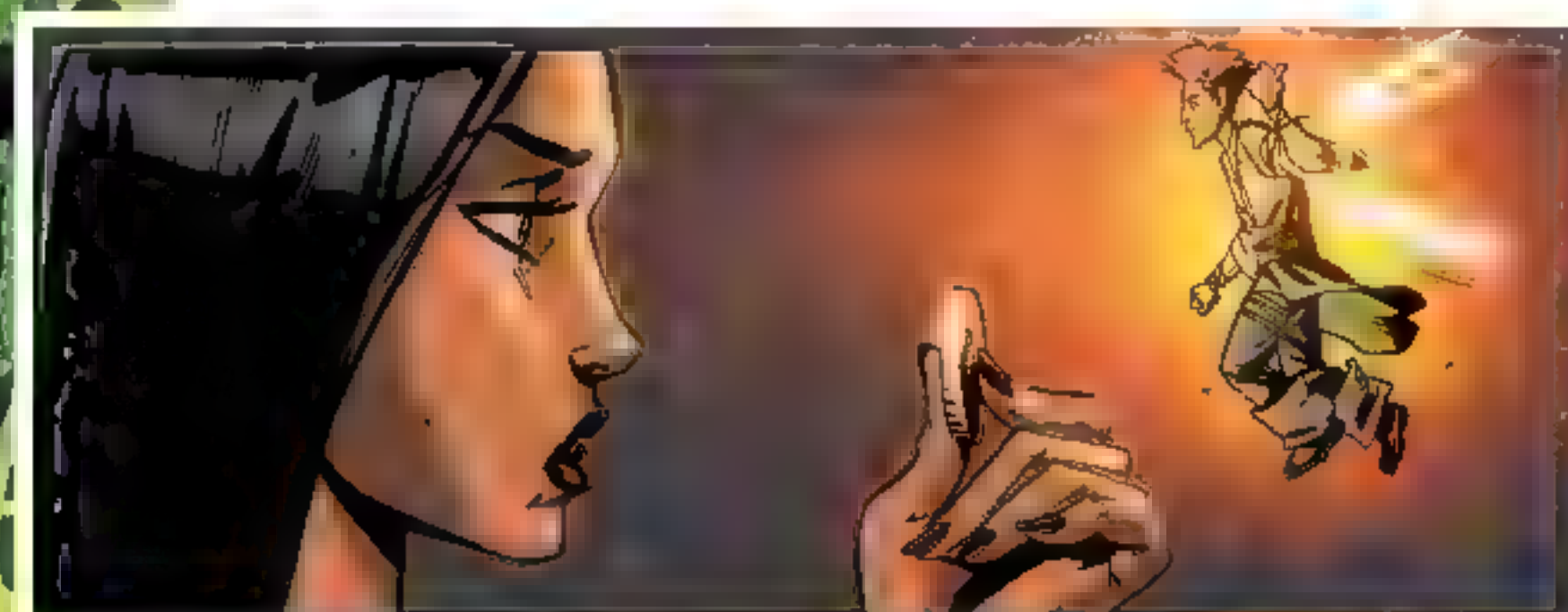


However, Hank was clueless to the fact that his old mentor, Hector, and his former girlfriend, Alle, were both possessed by Serké's spell cast upon them in the Void Realm. Under his tutelage, the pair would arrive back on Earth as his lieutenants of war.

In Los Angeles, Hank and allies, including his agent buddy, Kenny, found themselves on the run from the fiery magical lion, Torgan and his acolytes teeming through the city. Yet, the group was able to stave off these forces with the arrival of Haven, a tiny ally in the fight against Serké.



Using Dero's wooden box containing the golden coin, they opened the miniature portal to The Golden Realm, and Hank vanished them through to the other side. Unfortunately, Serké and the beast Torgan managed to capture and kill Kenny.



Meanwhile, in Louisiana, the wizard Kon sought out the assistance of his sworn enemy, the witch, Dura. Along with her help the pair managed to return to his temple just in time, as the shaman Serké freed Samsun from the Wall of Souls. Following another struggle between the two magical powerhouses, Serké and Samsun soon began to overwhelm them, yet the return of Orlana—the Death Princess—disrupted the fight.



Seeking her magical power back from Samsun, it was discovered that Serké had double-crossed Samsun in favor of Orlana, his long-lost lover. Together, their powerful magic proved too much for Kon and Dura, as she was sent into the Wall of Souls and Kon's magic escaped from his mortal body.

In the Golden Realm, the trio was quickly apprehended by The Golden Guard and sent to The Golden Hall to be sen-



tenced by Sha Lux, the resident ruler. Her judgment, however, was interrupted by the sudden arrival of Alle, Hector and Torgan—along with their acolytes looking to destroy the realm. Forced to team up to vanquish the greater evil, Hank, Sparkles, Sudana, Haven, Sha Lux and The Golden Guard were able to defeat Serké's minions, yet not without sacrifices on both sides.

Leaving Hector in the Golden Realm on his own accord, the group vanished back to Earth with Alle, but their union's trust was forever shattered as it was revealed Sudana held back on revealing her visions to the group.



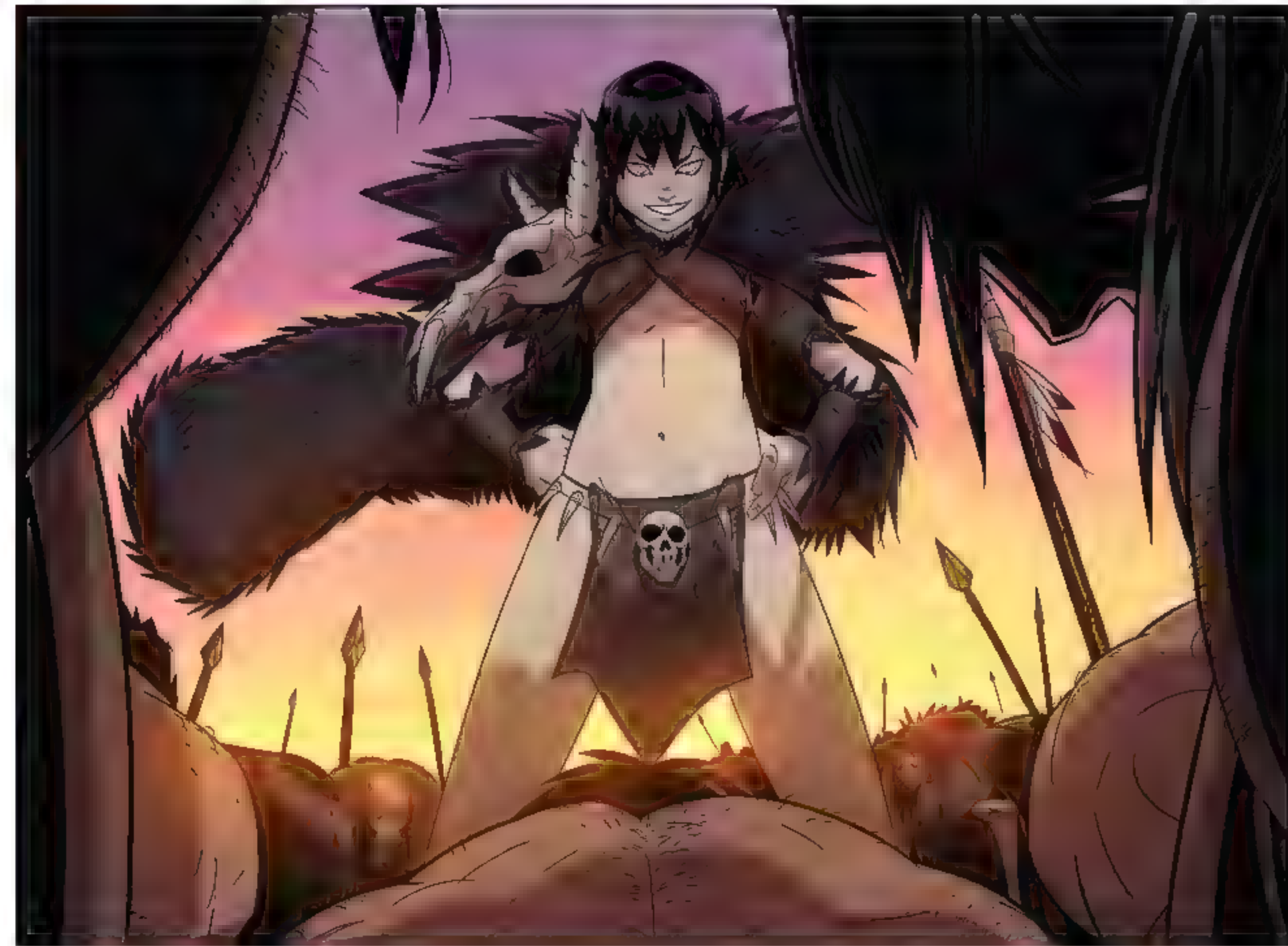
Read the entire story in Charismagic Volume 2 "The Golden Realm" TPB available in stores now!



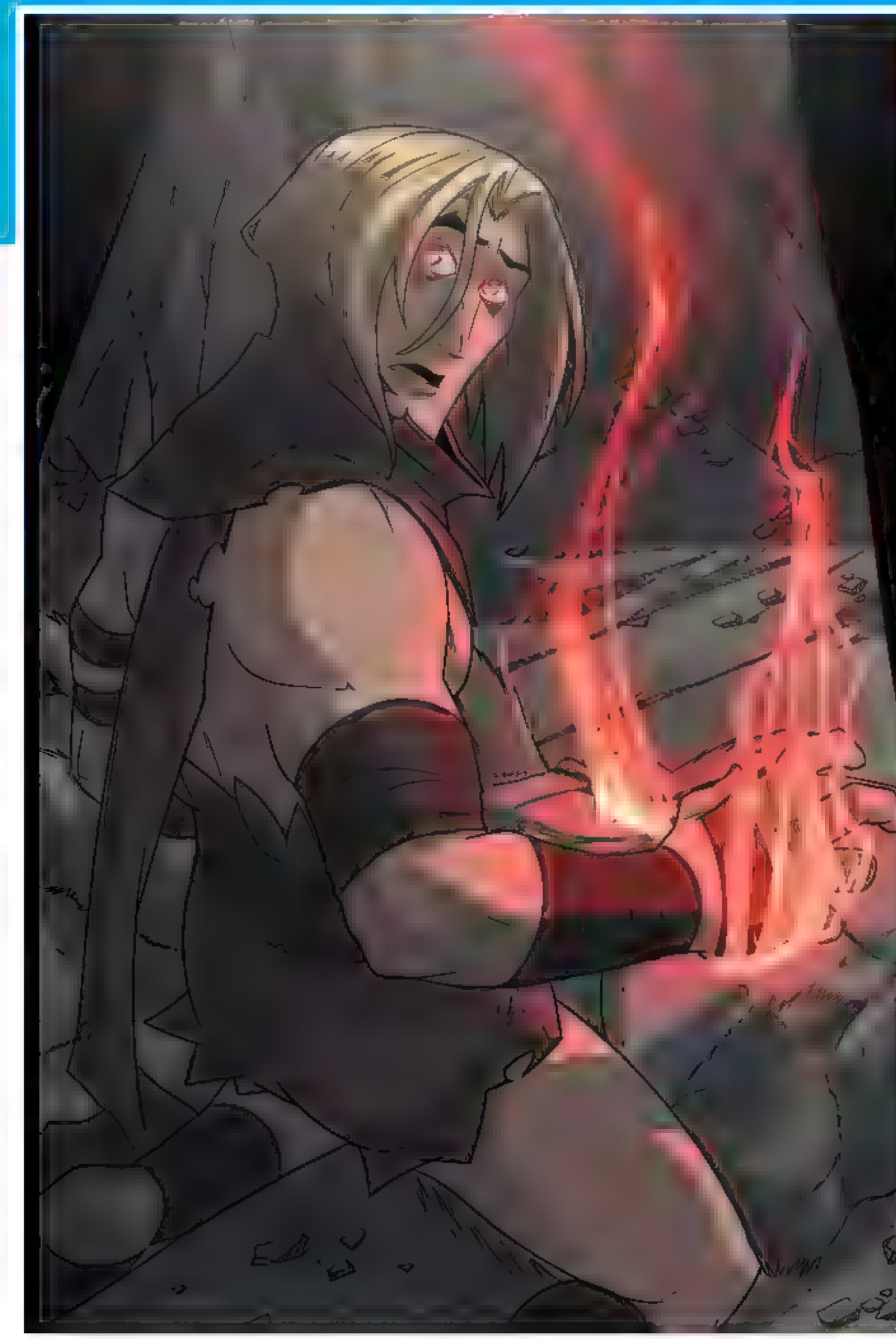
# CHARISMAGIC

## The Death Princess

Born with the ability to control minds, Orlana, a young girl with a keen sense of her own entitlement, would soon overthrow her own village during her rise to complete world domination in ancient times. It was revealed that not only could she control the minds of human beings, but also prehistoric beasts, leading to the unopposed command of her kingdom as the Death Princess.



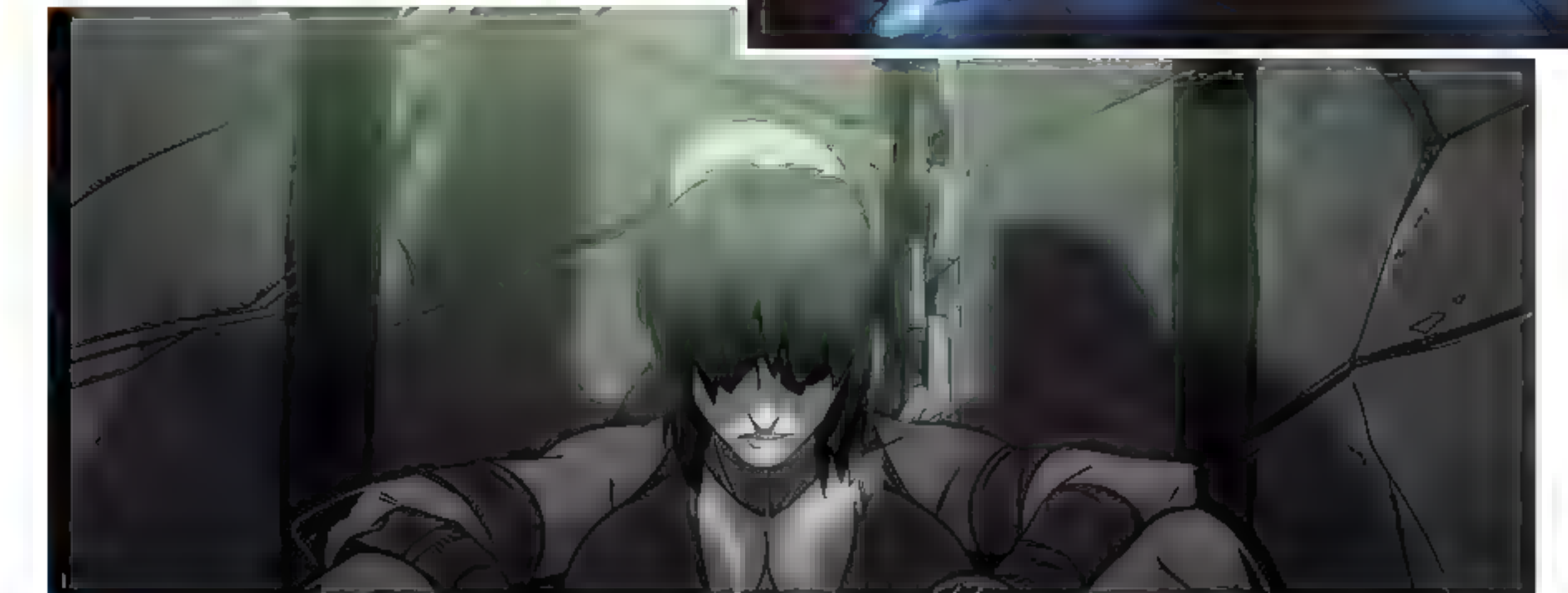
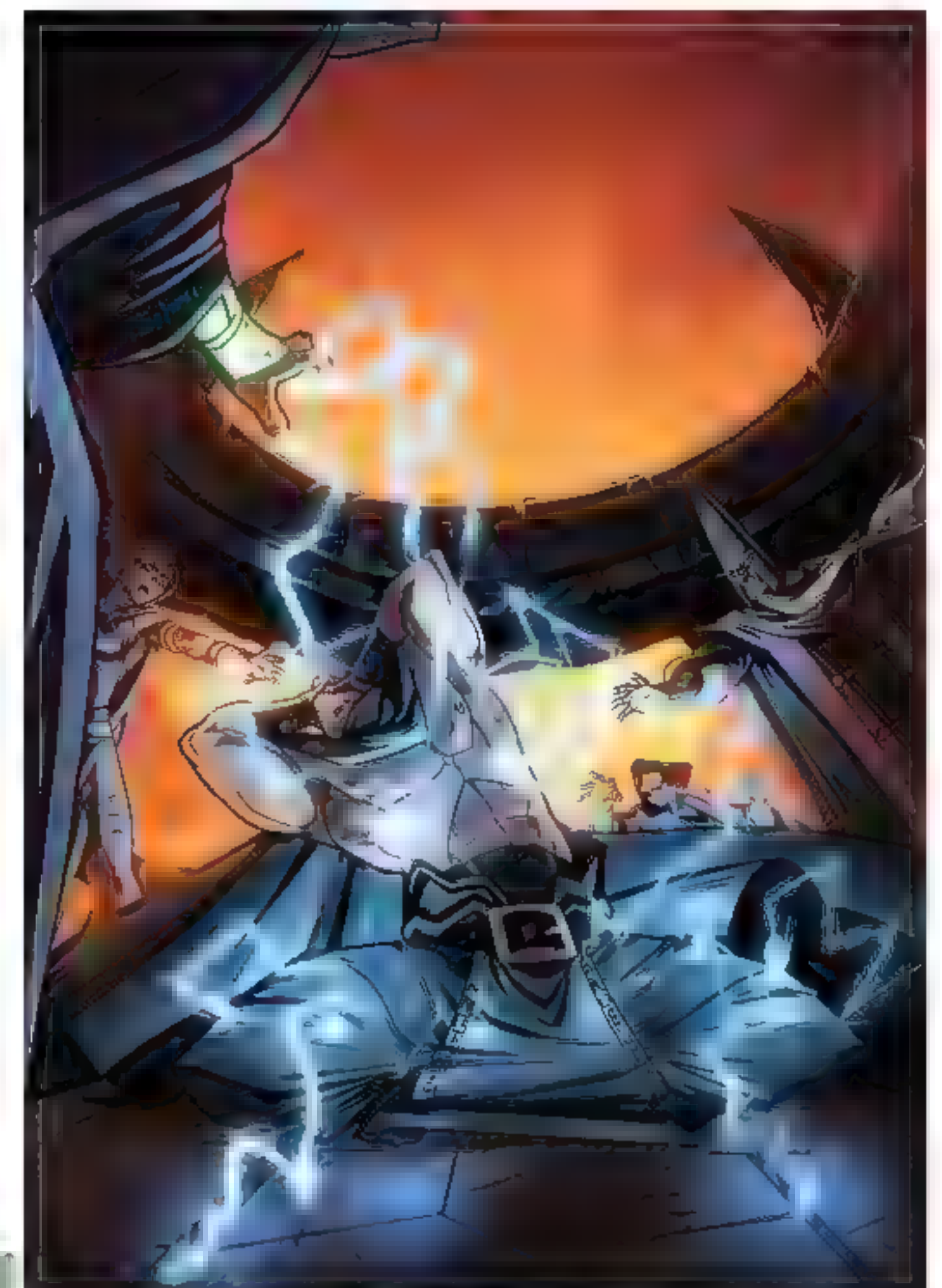
However, the young wizard Kon, along with his closest friend and ally, Serké, attempted to overthrow her rule, yet were unable to combat the many forces under Orlana's control. In desperation, Kon foolishly vanished himself into a Void Realm of time and matter, leaving his friend Serké to be captured by the Death Princess. This action would forever shatter their friendship.



In the Void, Kon was able to manifest new life itself using his powerful magic, and soon created a realm capable of sustaining life. The wizard deemed the time right to return to Earth and defeat Orlana once and for all. Seeking out the most powerful wizards in existence, Kon soon assembled The Order, a group of magical beings capable of aiding him in his quest. The group's final member was a naïve young man named Samsun.



During the battle for the kingdom of Orlana, The Order was able to sway the tides of war in their favor, but not without losing one of their own, Ro, in the process. The group utilized Samsun's ability to absorb magic to steal Orlana's powers, but Samsun was unable to control his own actions, and was incapacitated by his own allies. Kon managed to defeat Serké as well, sending his old friend to the Void Realm. Later, The Order collectively decided to also send Samsun to the Void to live out his life in eternity. The Death Princess was sentenced to work out her life in a slave camp, yet a trace amount of her powerful magic soon returned.



Read the entire story in  
**Charismagic: The Death Princess** available now!  
Collected TPB in stores October 2018!



The forces of magic have returned—and this time no magical being is safe!

# Charismatic

Vol. 3

#1

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NOW!



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WITH THE RETURN OF CHARISMAGIC!**

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# DELLA

# DELLA



Moore '09  
B. Pelt



A Message from  
The Creators...

# DELLEC CONCEIVED

## 0::0

First, if you're reading this we'd like to give you our sincerest thanks for either checking out DELLEC for the first time—or returning for a second dose after all these years. We've been chomping at the bit to bring back Aspen's toughest bad-ass, and it wouldn't be possible...without YOU!

DELLEC is the culmination and evolution of a concept that faith and evil can be intertwined in such a way that everything you think you know about religion could be turned on its head. However, at its core, this story is about one man's struggle to regain everything that he's lost in life. It's a survivor story about overcoming adversity, and we feel DELLEC as a series is no different. You can't keep a fun, hard-hitting adventure down for long!

Now, things have changed quite a bit since the first volume of DELLEC, so we'd like to introduce you to this special DELLEC PRIMER issue that will fill you in on everything you need to know for Volume 2—and more! But, like all things in DELLEC, don't just take our word on faith. That would not be wise. We encourage you to explore the world for yourself and see what fun (and brutal) plans we have in store for our hero. Volume one was a cakewalk compared to what DELLEC will face in volume two!

And you thought your life was tough!  
*Frank Mastromauro & Vince Hernandez*

THE SPARKS SHOOT  
INTO MY FACE,  
BURNING MY SKIN,  
SCARRING MY FLESH.

BUT I COULD  
CARE LESS.

...BECAUSE PAIN  
DOESN'T MATTER  
TO ME ANYMORE.



Direct Edition  
by MICHAEL GUNNELL  
& PETER STEIGERWALD

Dellec created by Frank Mastromauro & Vince Hernandez

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YOU CAN FEEL IT IF YOU TRY.  
MOST OF US QUESTION OUR FAITH AT SOME POINT.  
AND WHY WE BELIEVE.







I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN THIS TIME WITH YOU.

JAMES-- YOU'RE STARTING TO WORRY ME.

GOOD.

YOU'VE STUDIED LONG ENOUGH, IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE REAL WORLD DANGERS...

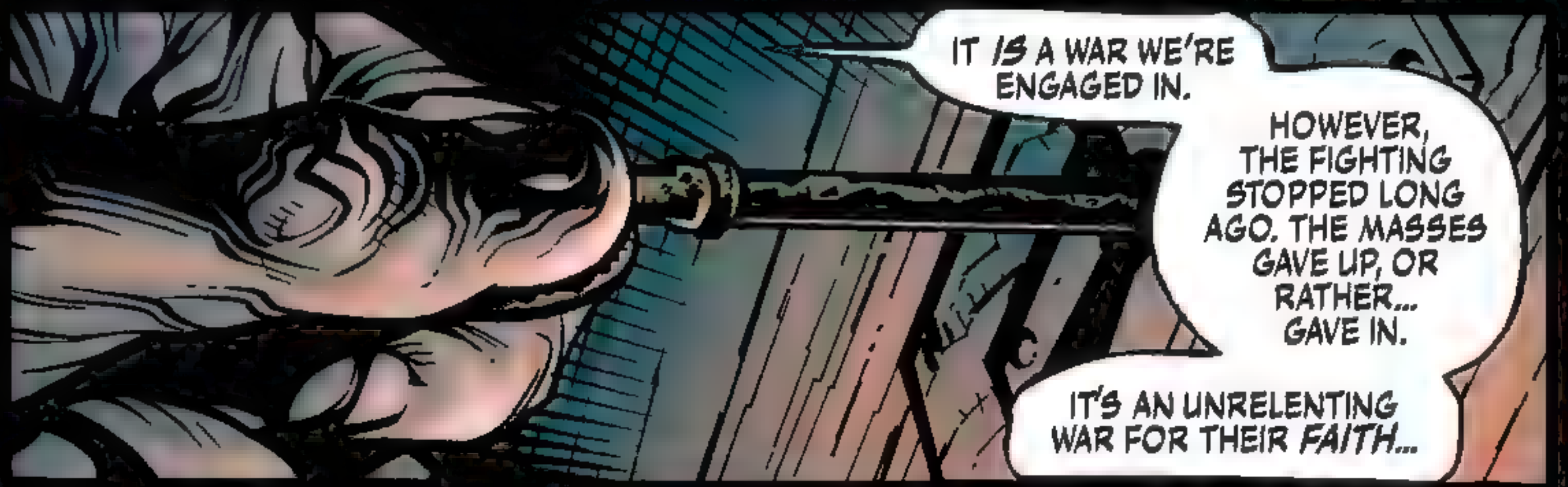
...GOD'S DANGERS.



WHAT?

IT'S NOT EXACTLY WAR WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE.

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE RIGHT-- AND WRONG.



IT IS A WAR WE'RE ENGAGED IN.

HOWEVER, THE FIGHTING STOPPED LONG AGO. THE MASSES GAVE UP, OR RATHER... GAVE IN.

IT'S AN UNRELENTING WAR FOR THEIR FAITH...



...FOR THEIR SOULS.

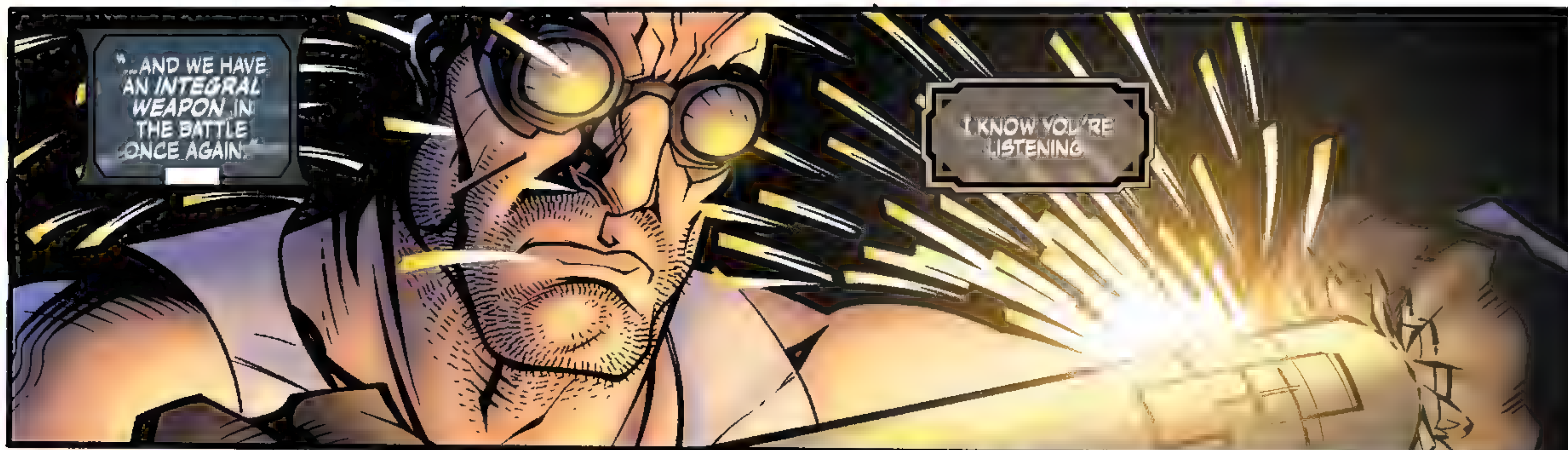


BUT NOW...



...OUR FIGHT BEGINS ANEW...





"...AND WE HAVE  
AN INTEGRAL  
WEAPON IN  
THE BATTLE  
ONCE AGAIN."

I KNOW YOU'RE  
LISTENING.

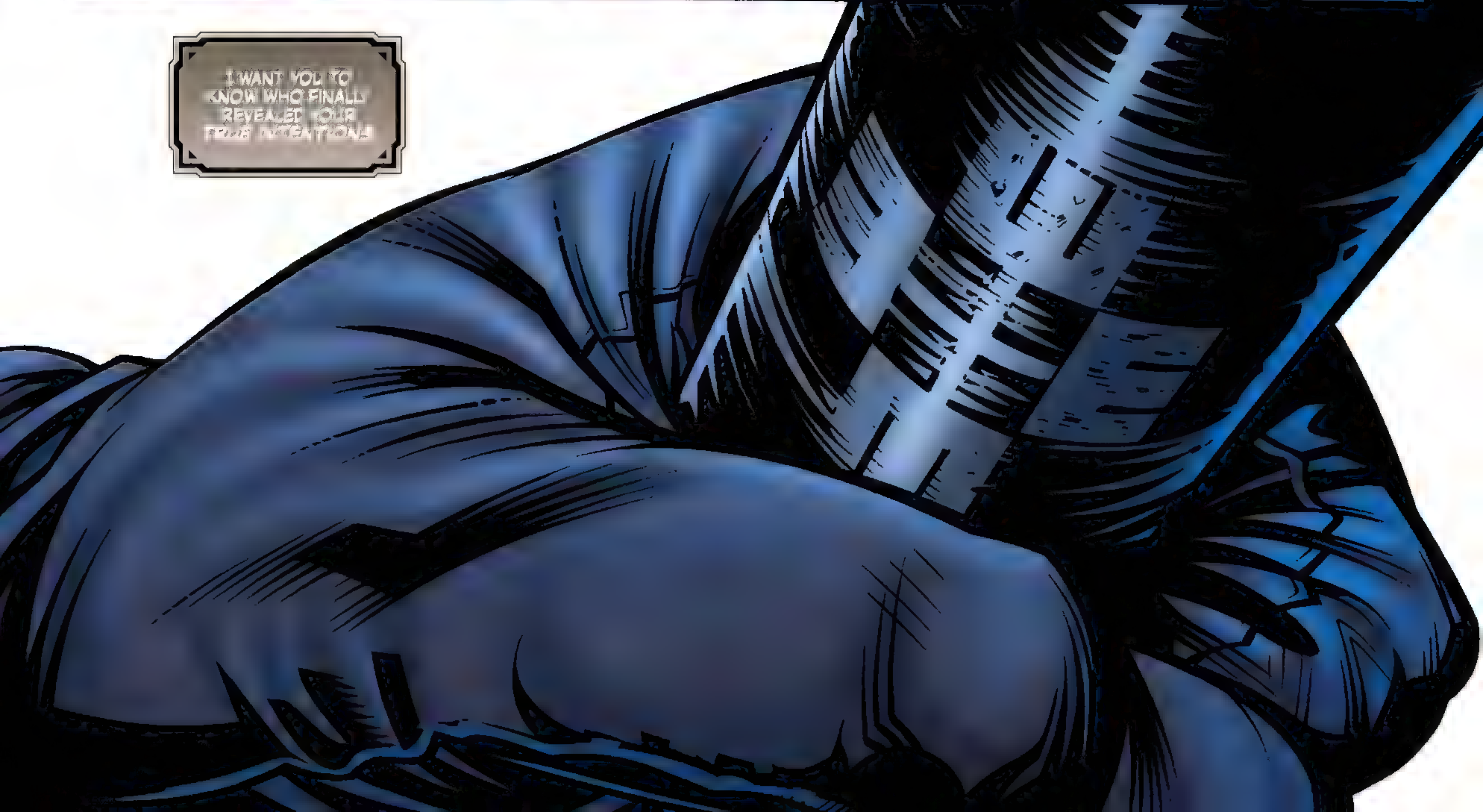


I KNOW YOU  
CAN READ MY  
THOUGHTS.

THAT'S FINE  
BY ME.

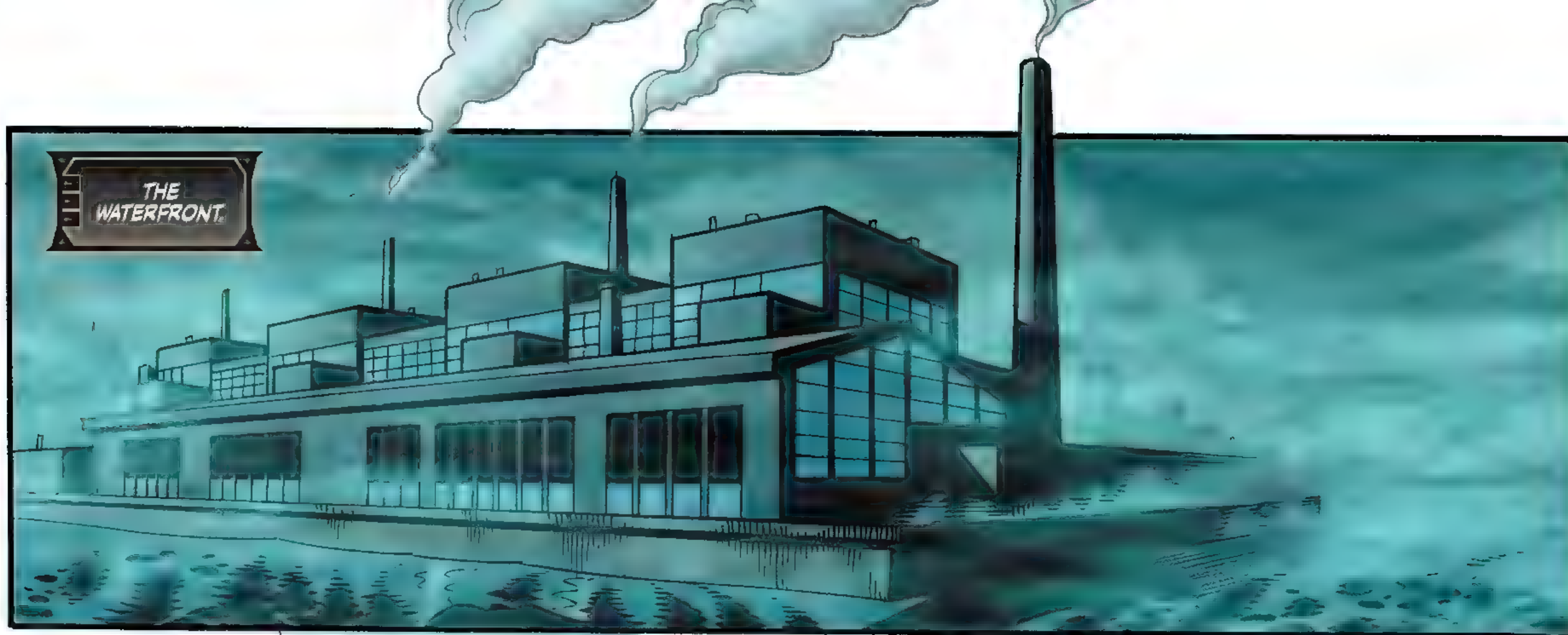


I WANT YOU  
TO SEE ME  
COMING.

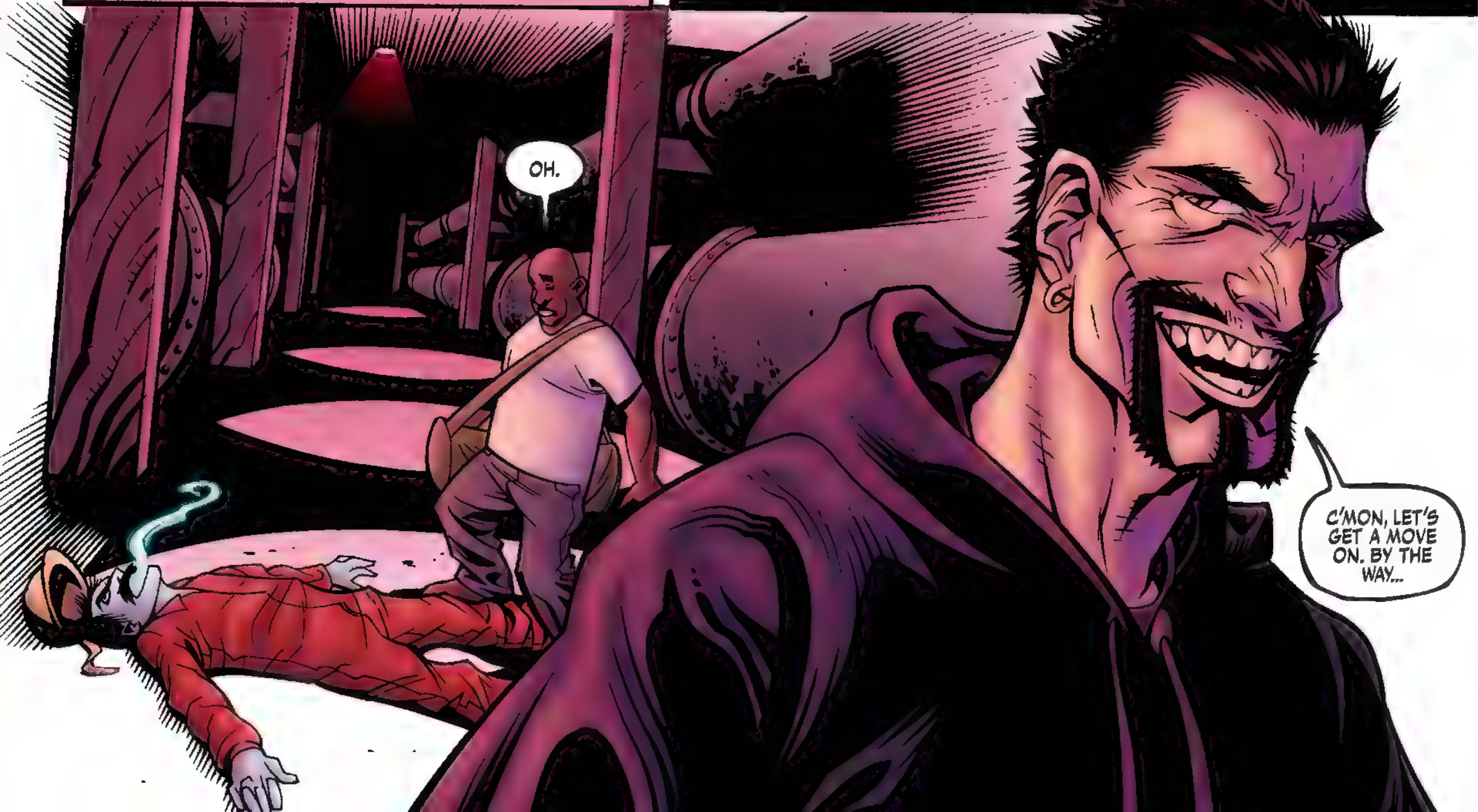
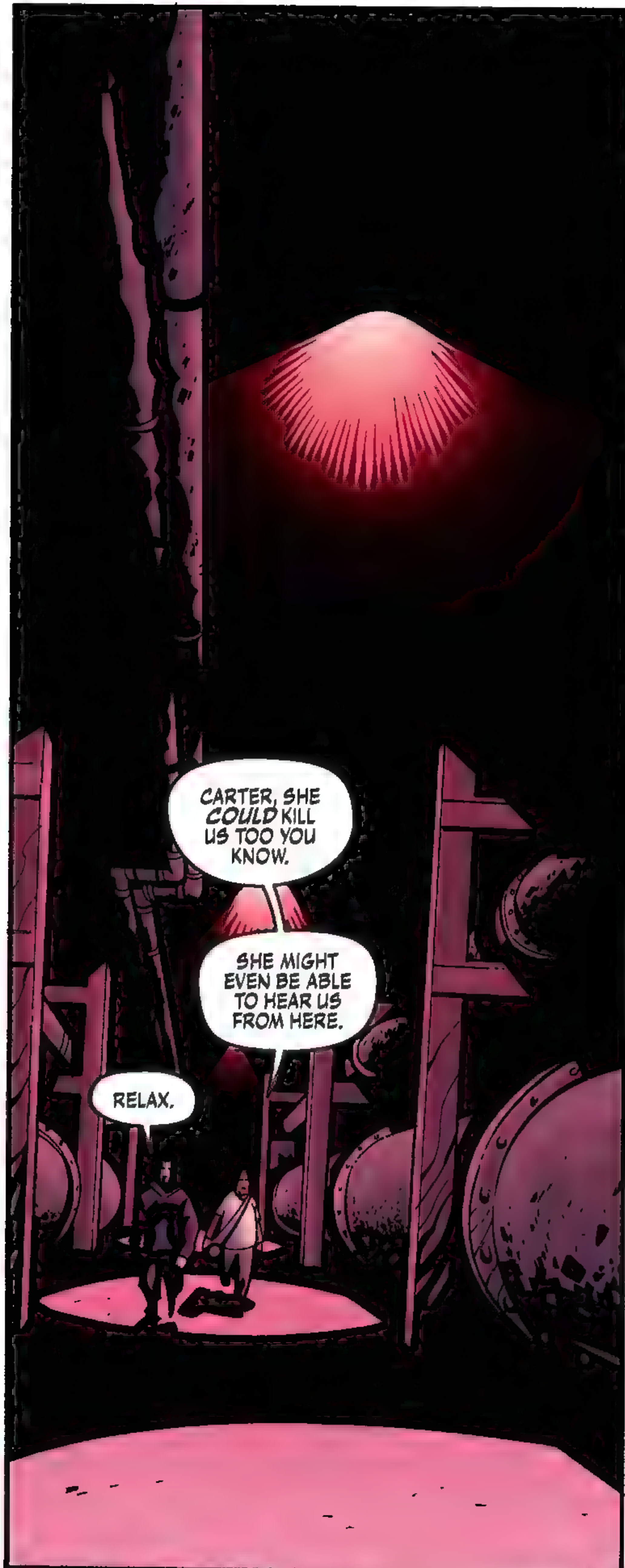


I WANT YOU TO  
KNOW WHO FINALLY  
REVEALED YOUR  
TRUE INTENTIONS!

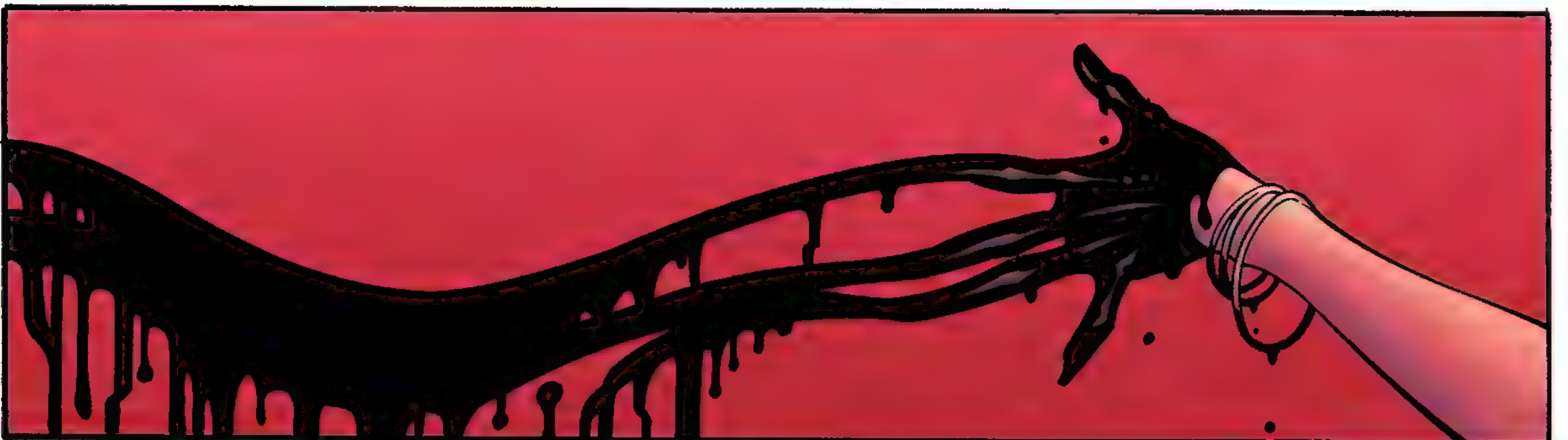
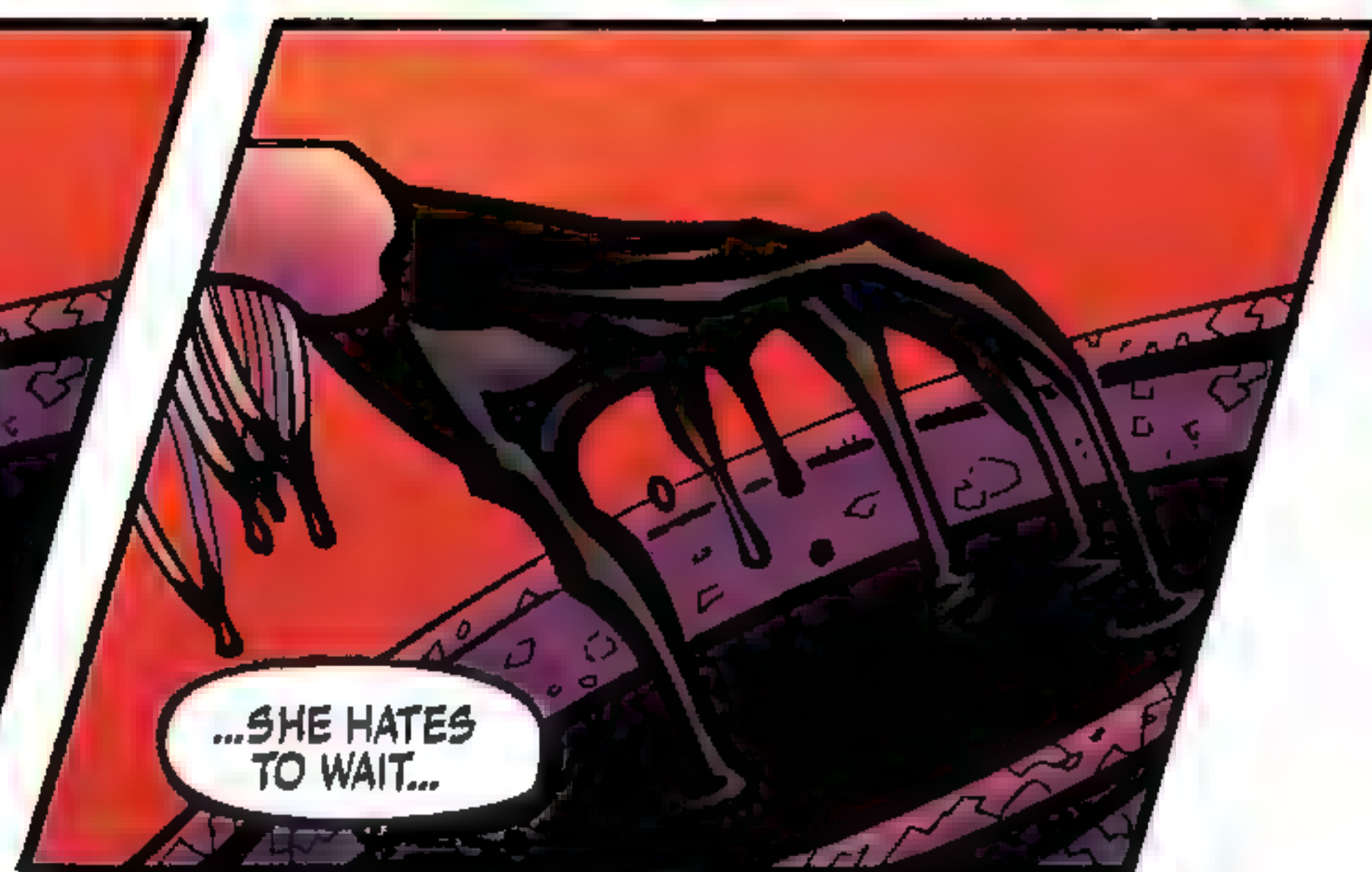
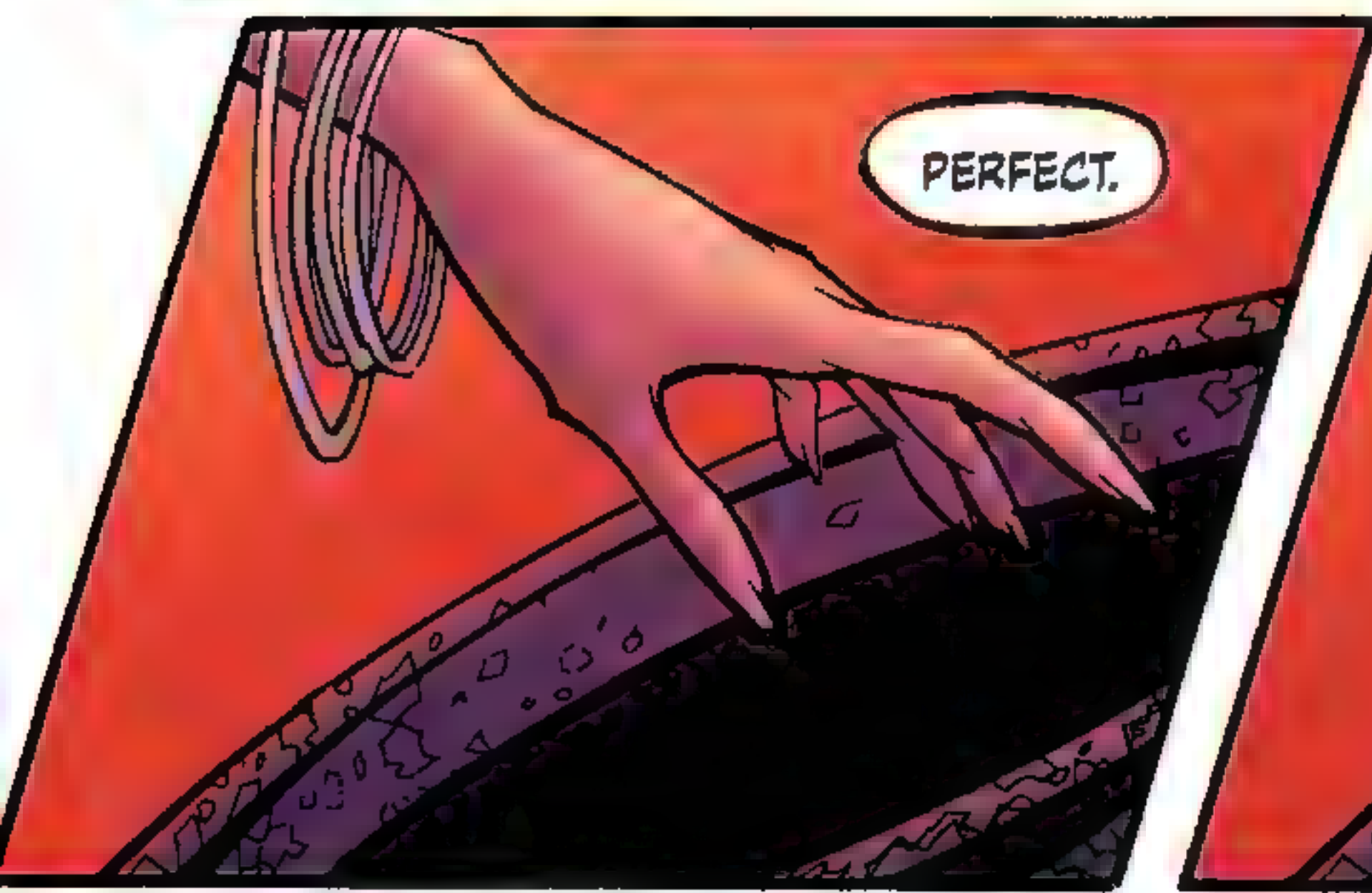
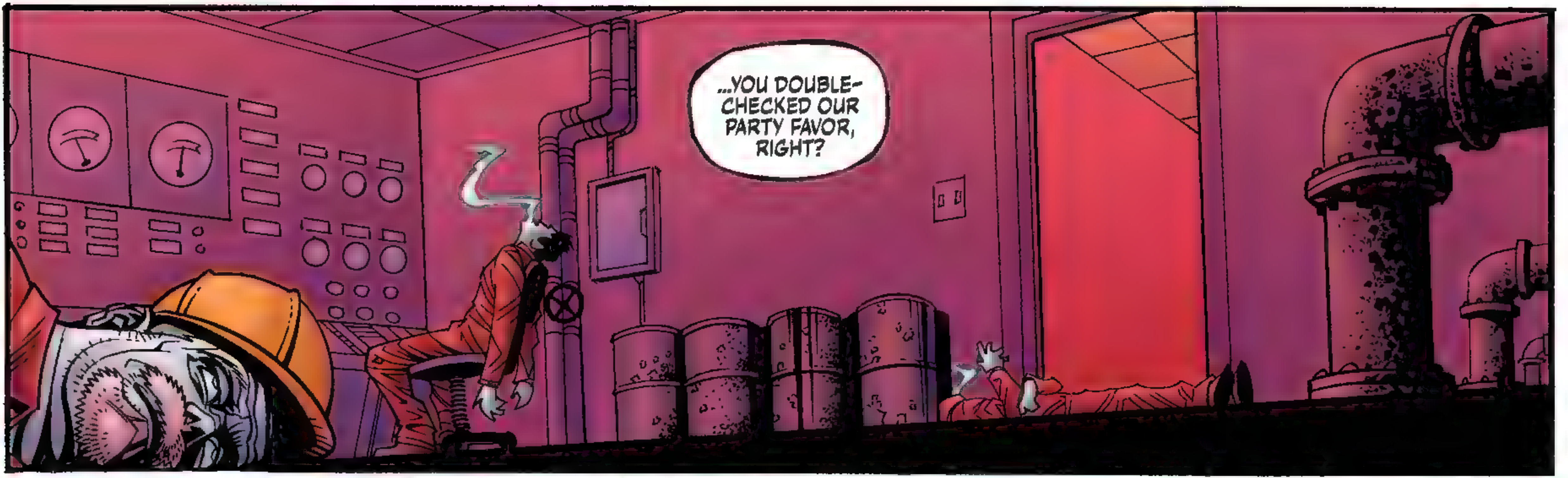




















HELLO,  
BOYS.

YOU'RE  
LATE.

AND *HERE* I  
DID ALL THE  
WORK FOR YOU.





IT'S HIS FAULT,  
HIS CONSTANT  
JABBERING.

A\$\$HOLE.



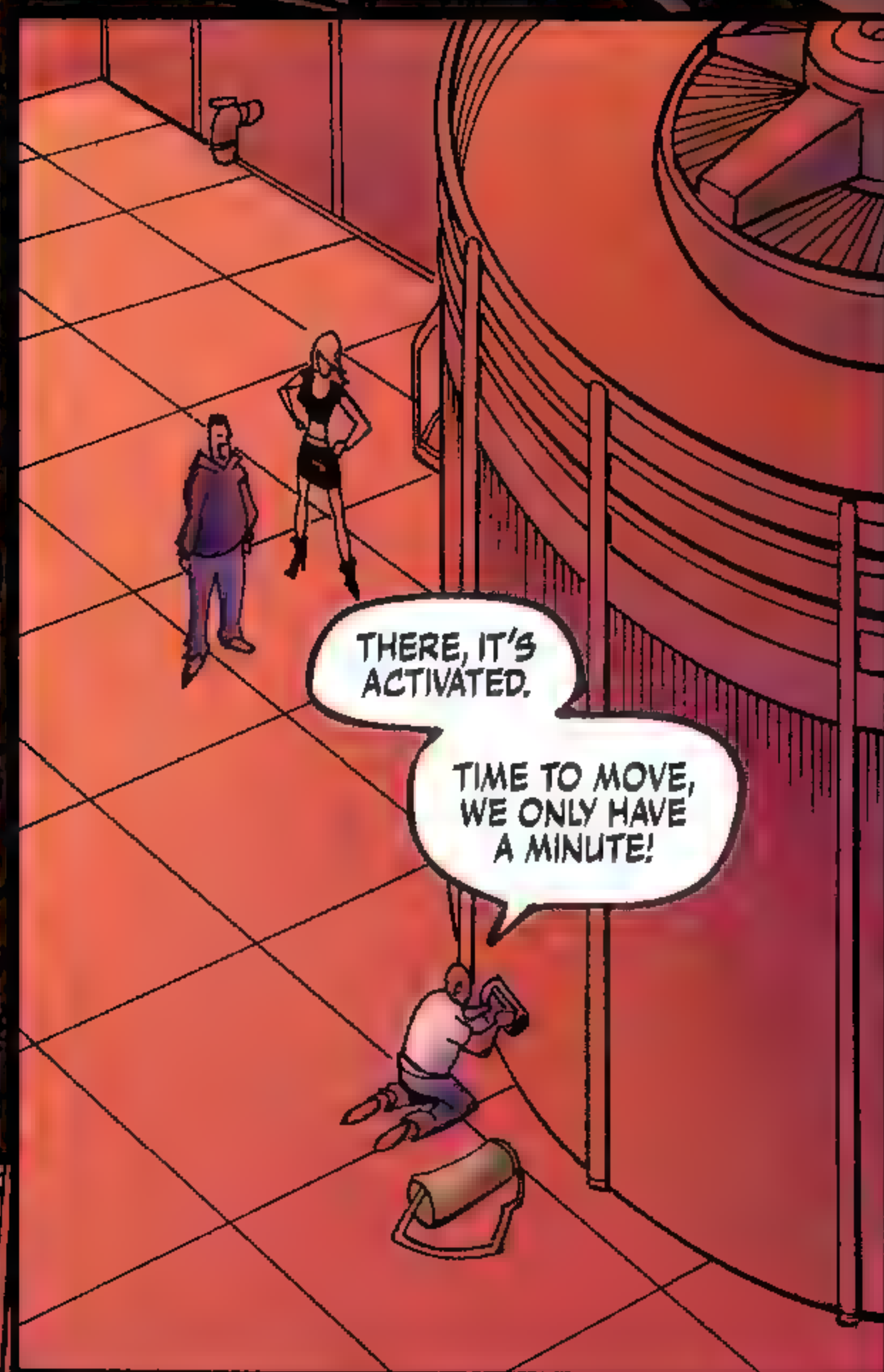
JUST HURRY  
UP AND GET  
THE DAMN  
CHARGES SET!



FELLAS,  
RELAX.

ENJOY  
YOURSELVES.

I KNOW  
I AM.

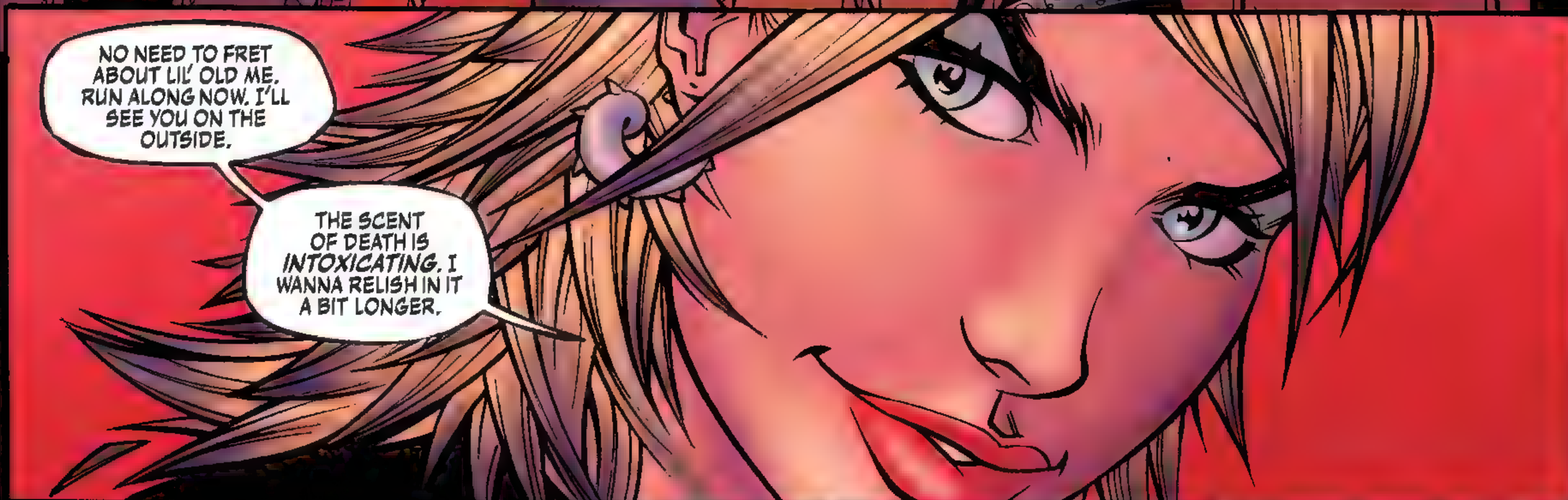


THERE, IT'S  
ACTIVATED.

TIME TO MOVE,  
WE ONLY HAVE  
A MINUTE!



HURRY, THIS  
IS GONNA BE  
A BIG ONE!



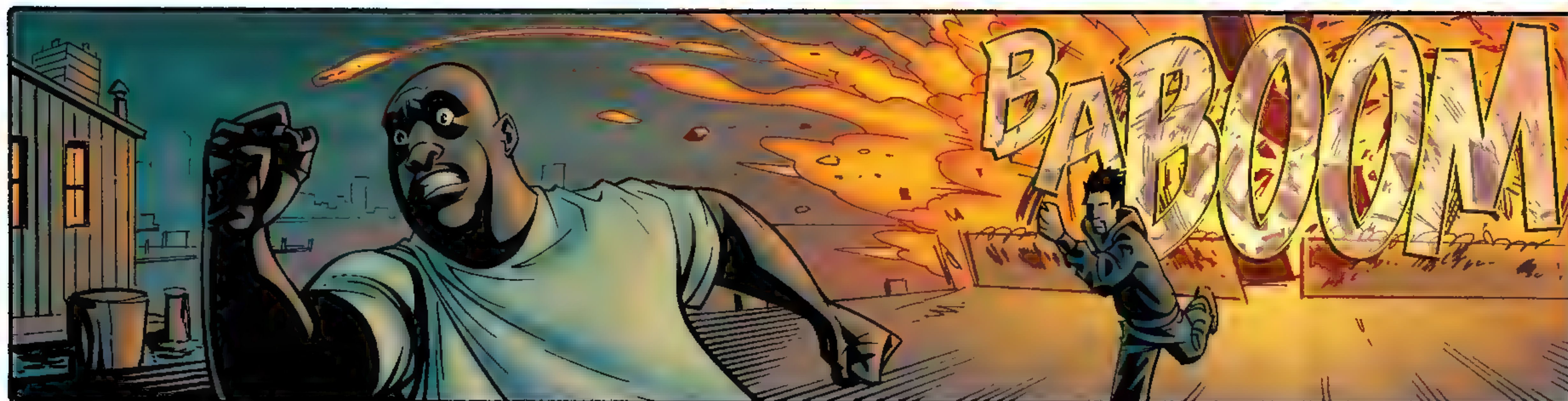
NO NEED TO FRET  
ABOUT LIL' OLD ME.  
RUN ALONG NOW. I'LL  
SEE YOU ON THE  
OUTSIDE.

THE SCENT  
OF DEATH IS  
INTOXICATING. I  
WANNA RELISH IN IT  
A BIT LONGER.





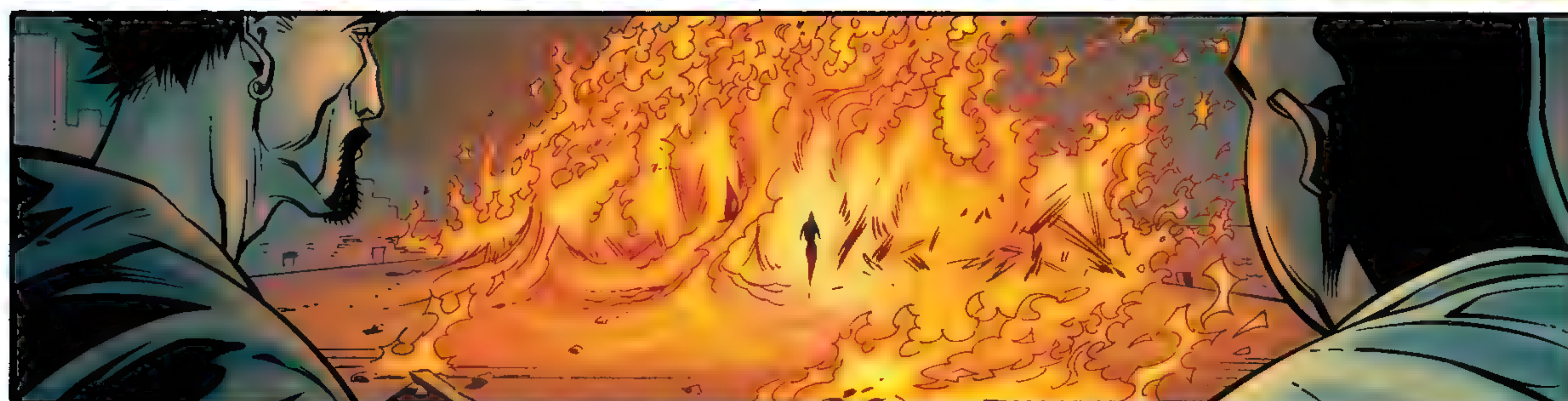
I'M GOING TO STRIKE  
DOWN ON YOU WITH  
THE SAME FURY YOU  
USE TO CREATE FEAR...



DID SHE?



I'LL MAKE YOU  
PAY FOR WHAT  
YOU TOOK  
FROM ME...



HEYA,  
BOYS.  
GOT A  
LIGHT?





AND LIKE THE  
BLACKOUT THAT NOW  
SHROUDS THIS  
WOEFUL CITY...

I WILL CAST YOU  
BACK INTO THE  
DARKNESS FROM  
WHICH YOU CAME.



# DELLEC™

Vol. 1

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Dellec's origin actually spans centuries into Biblical Times, as he was once a soldier of The Creator alongside Tera, sowing fear and evil in order to strengthen faith in their cause. However, Dellec split from their campaign and attempted to live a normal human life, with his wife and daughter, Andy.

Yet, the forces of The Creator would not allow such an existence, and the demigod, Tera, was sent to murder his wife in cold blood. But, this tragic act would only embolden Dellec to discover the true nature of God's plan. With the help of their local pastor, Father Strayer, that bestowed two powerful staves containing the blood of The Creator, Dellec set upon a quest to wage war against The Creator's minions of chaos.

Dellec fought the good fight and took out evil where he could, but the war soon reached Dellec and Strayer's doorstep as Tera decimated the priest's church. Dellec attempted to fend off Tera's Fallen Angels, and the Demigod herself, but was unable to defeat such powerful forces. Tera killed Dellec by ripping out his heart. In the wake of her father's murder, Andy was given a special gift by Father Strayer—Dellec's staves of power, to continue the war...

Read More in the Pages of  
**DELLEC VOLUME 1**  
Available Now





# DELLEC

Here are some behind-the-scenes  
information from Dellec co-creator  
Frank Mastromauro.

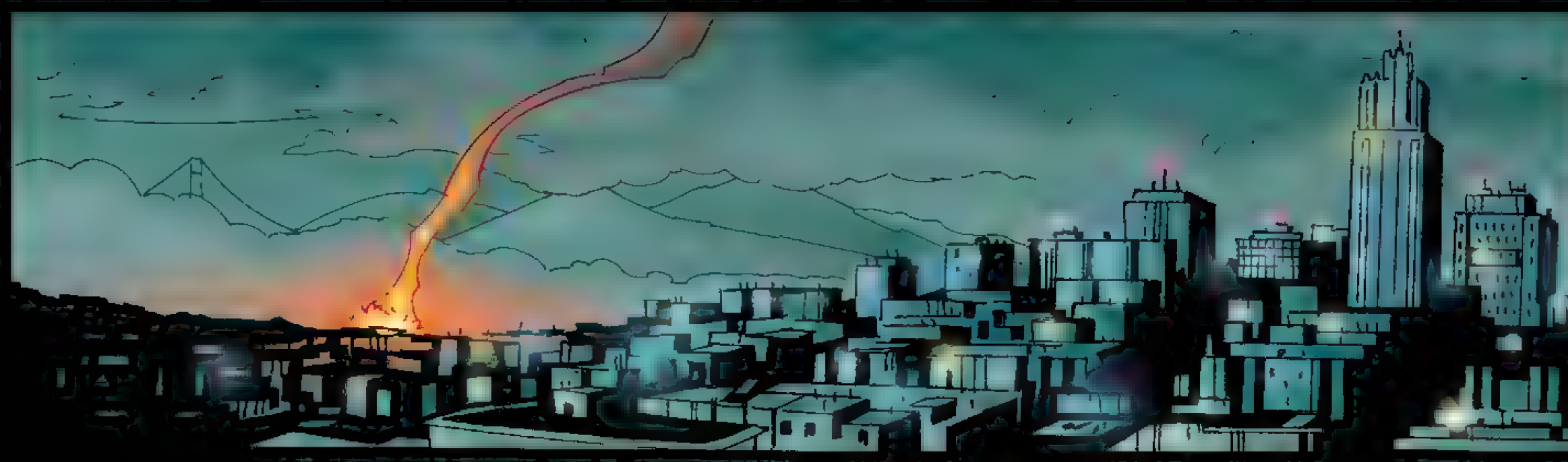
"Dellec was created years ago on one of our many convention road  
trips between California and Arizona. Vince and I came up with the  
concept and kept fine-tuning the story, most likely fueling all of Dellec's  
rage with our own road-raging tendencies."

## The World of Dellec...

It's spreading...and no place is safe from  
The Creator's evil.

The world of DELLEC exists in the darkness,  
under the streets and in the furthest  
corners of reality. The souls of impurity  
exist in every facet of society, and before  
his murder, Dellec took it upon himself to  
explore and eradicate it where he could.  
However, he was only one man, and the  
forces of ill repute will stop at nothing to  
blanket the land in their shadow.

It's spreading...but, can anyone stop it?





# The World of Good...

## DELLEC

The titular hero in Dellec has a tragic past that is only overshadowed by his brutal present. He once lived a happy life with his wife and young daughter, but discovered he was part of a war spanning the dawn of our world. Soon thereafter, the insidious Tera murdered his wife in cold blood, leading Dellec upon a quest for the true purpose of his life, and waging a battle against The Creator's minions of fear and evil. Dellec currently finds himself in the afterlife following his murder at the hands of Tera (Volume 1).



"Being big gamers, we structured our first volume of Dellec similar to a video game, having Dellec facing bigger and badder adversaries each issue. Just when Dellec thought he had vanquished his foe, the next adversary was basically 'leveled up' and Dellec would again be in of the fight of his life!"



## ANDY

Dellec's daughter has struggled in the past to come to grips with her mother's brutal murder. However, nothing could prepare her for the reveal that her father is waging a war against God himself. Following the events of Volume One, Andy was seen taking up the mantle of her father's mission, under the tutelage of Father Strayer.



## FATHER STRAYER

The mentor and spiritual advisor to Dellec, Father Strayer has knowledge of The Creator that is both useful and detrimental to his own existence—since he is often called upon to fight the forces of evil. Strayer's true origin remains shrouded for now.

"In many of my stories and comics, I like to toss in as many 'In Jokes' and friend references as I can. Most of the time, only a handful of people even know what they mean, but Dellec has quite a few peppered throughout the series, including 'CRUPPS BAGELS', in honor of our friend and Aspenstore head honcho, Chris Rupp!"

## LEDGE

Dellec's metal shop assistant and friend, and also Andy's boyfriend, Ledge remained on the sidelines of the war between The Creator and Dellec, since at the time Dellec's true calling was not yet known to him. However, Ledge is someone that could continue to play a key role in Dellec Volume 2.

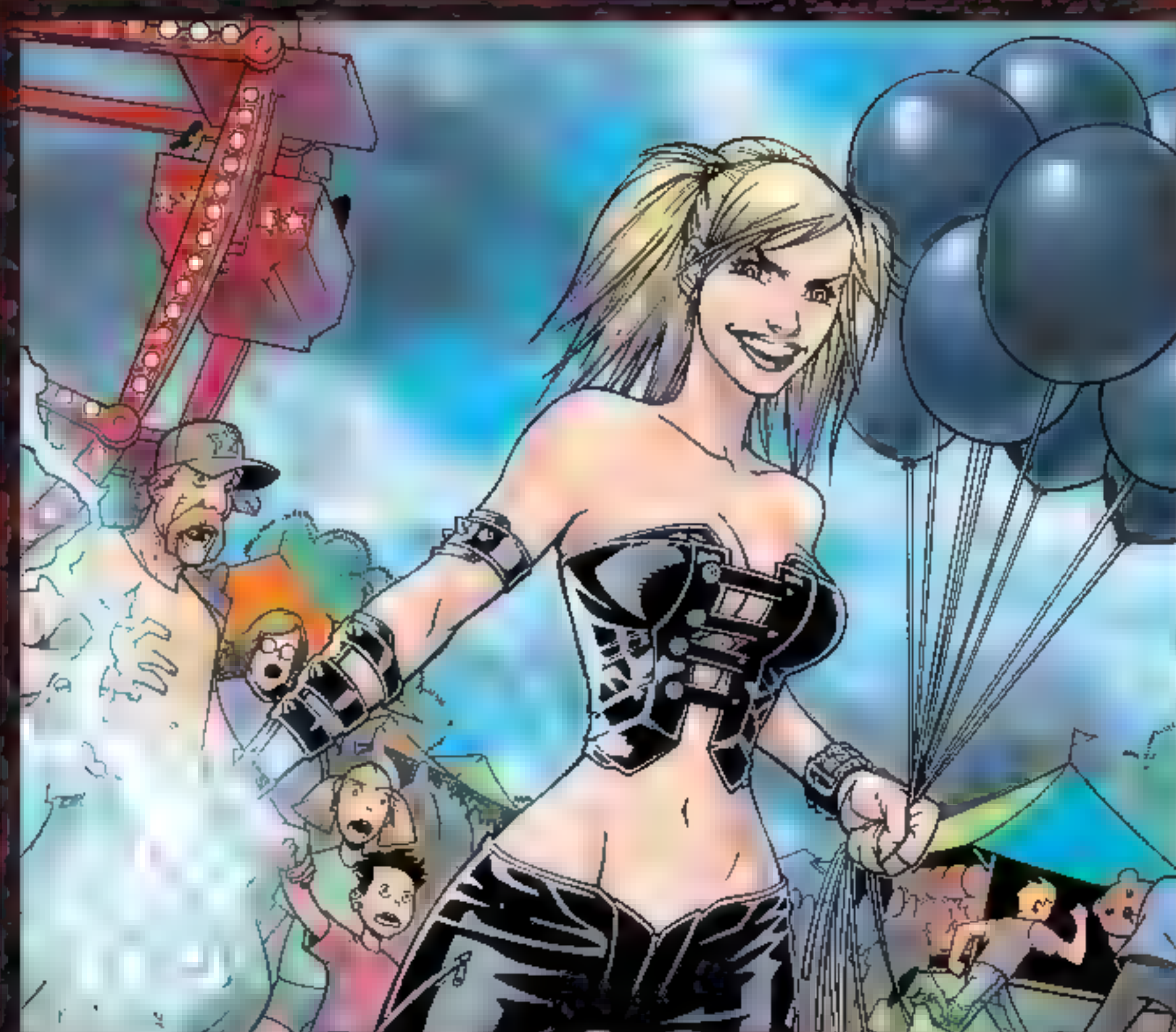




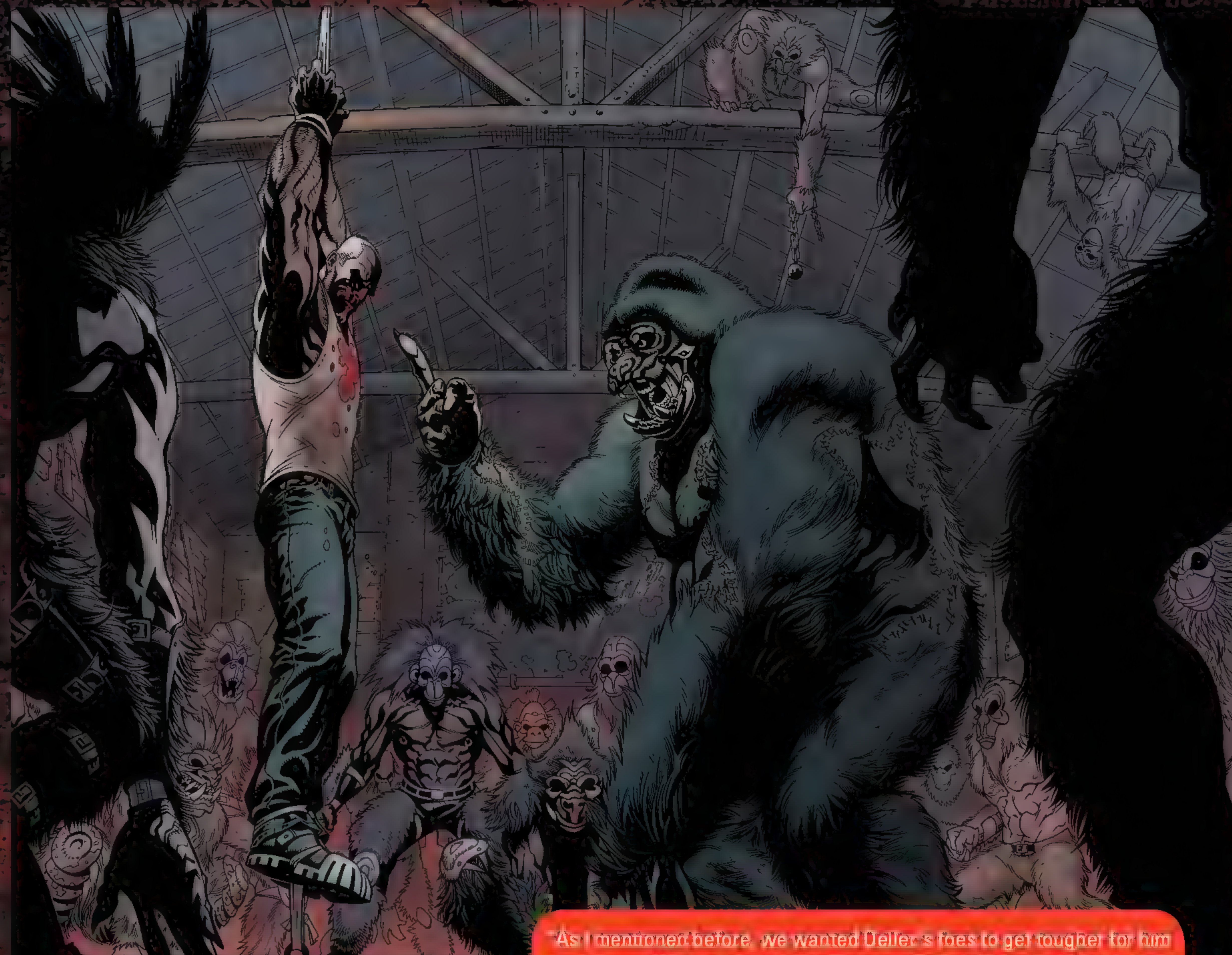
# The World of Evil...

## TERA

A Demi-God born of The Creator's need to assign those to sow the seeds of evil throughout the world. It was revealed in Volume One that Dellec was to be her counterpart in waging this campaign of chaos and bloodshed, but he had other plans. Tera has been merciless in her quest to torture Dellec's existence since that moment. This included killing both his wife and Dellec himself. Since his death, her reign has gone unrivaled and the world has fallen into darkness.



Tera made her very first appearance in the 'Street Sessions' comic convention exclusive ashcan that came out in 2006. The ashcan contained art and stories by our close friends and many of today's top artists, including Francis Manapul, Marcus To, Joei Gomes, Koi Turnbull and LeSean Thomas.



"As I mentioned before, we wanted Dellec's foes to get tougher for him each issue. We introduced the Kongs in Dellec #1 but held back their leader, Silverback, for a full reveal later on in the series. That big ape certainly doesn't monkey around. Ha!"

## SILVERBACK and the KONGS

The Kongs laid claim to Dellec's turf since before the hero took up the cause, and have existed in some form or fashion since then. Dellec's run-ins with The Kongs have always ended in bloodshed, but the vigilante has held his own each time they've met. When The Kongs will strike again is anyone's guess.



## The SOUL CREATURES

Simply put—the Soul Creatures are Tera's victims-turned-allies, as she uses them at will as merciless soldiers in her war. They have successfully spread throughout the world, replacing evil where she sees fit.

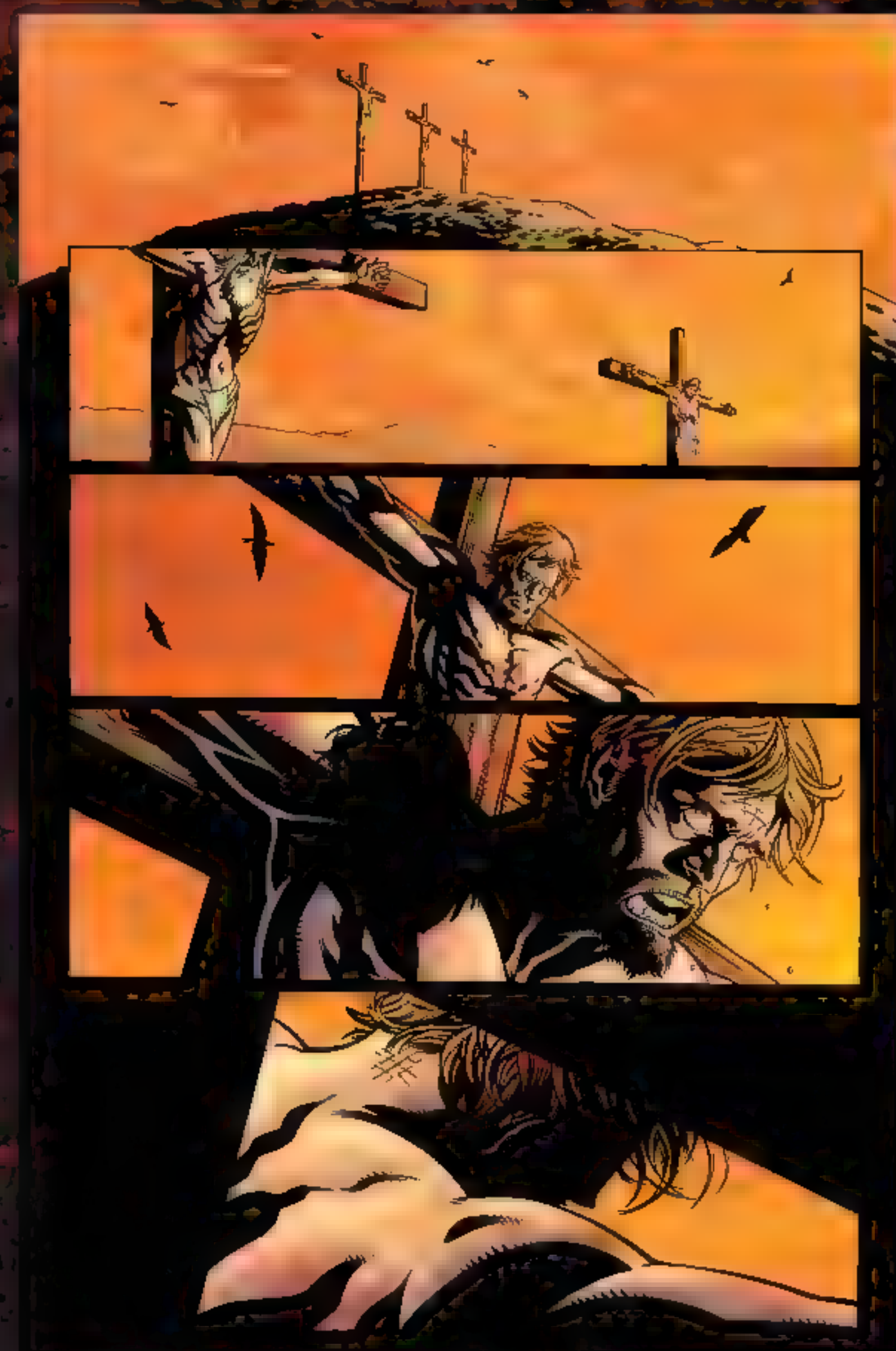




# Biblical Times...

The world of DELLEC truly spans into ancient history, as elements of the past forged The Creator's path to faith based upon fear. However, even at times of God's greatest strength there were those who opposed his rule. Volume One also saw the formation of Dellec's two greatest weapons in the battle between good and evil—his staffs forged from the blood of The Creator and powerful sirens able to discover evil anywhere it may appear.

"As co-creator of Dellec, it was only fitting that Vince also be on hand centuries ago for the actual creation of Dellec's staffs! How you ask? Easy! Series artist Micah Gunnell drew our boy Vince into the series as one of the non-believers. Biblical non-believing Vince in the house!"





A NEW BREED OF EVIL HAS EMERGED...

# DELEC™

On a quest to avenge the  
tragedies of his past...

...and remedy  
an evil threatening  
every living  
soul!

#1



Available  
Digitally!

Cover A by:  
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Omi Remalante Jr. :: Micah Myers

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# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT FIRE'S







Direct Edition  
by - **JOE BENITEZ**  
& - **PETER STEIGERWALD**

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Trained from birth to be an assassin, Iris spent her youth in the brutal 'Academy' in mainland China, honing her skills in martial arts, swordplay and sharpshooting. Soon after graduation, Iris was under the employ of a notorious crime lord—a vicious corporatist known as Mr. Ching. She acted as his personal Executive Assistant: servant, bodyguard, and killer-for-hire. In exchange for her servitude, Iris was furnished with a life of luxury where she wanted for nothing, but soon, material possessions weren't enough to satiate her.

She wanted freedom.

Battling insurmountable odds, Iris eventually rid the world of Mr. Ching, undoubtedly saving countless lives in the process ... but the absence of China's crime lord left a powerful vacuum, and new threats began to arise. Iris re-dedicated herself to being an Executive Assistant, but this time as a protector instead of a servant. She was no longer going to allow herself to be wielded as a blunt object by those in power, killing indiscriminately in the pursuit of material gain. Now, at a crossroads of her life (and with the battle scars to prove it) Iris must choose between continuing her journey alone, or partnering with the powerful Magni Corporation. In a world of assassins where careers are short—and life spans are even shorter—she's unsure how much longer she can survive as a freelancer.

## EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: IRIS THE MAJOR PLAYERS:

### Iris



Born in Wuhan, China, and orphaned from birth, Iris was raised at a facility devoted to training young girls in a variety of ways, from martial arts to etiquette, all designed to create the perfect Executive Assistant—a companion, bodyguard, secretary and assassin all in one. Hired by a ruthless Chinese businessman, Mr. Ching, Iris performed her duties meticulously and without question, until his relentless ambition led her to commit actions that grew ever more ethically questionable. When Iris questioned this, her employer turned on her, and in order to survive, she was forced to kill him. Since then, she has worked for several other employers as well as the United States government, still meticulously, but always adhering to her own strict sense of ethics—always doing what she believes is right.

### Rose



A couple of years older than Iris, Rose took pity on the younger girl when she arrived at the academy, helping Iris as she learned how to succeed there. Eventually, the two became executive assistants to rival employers, and they were forced to fight. Although Rose fought magnificently with her trademark shuriken, Iris emerged victorious, seemingly killing her. She survived, though, and was ultimately forced into servitude by Duncan Villone. Eventually freed from his control by Iris, the two have since teamed up to fight a common enemy, but Iris knows she can never truly trust Rose.

### Mr. Ching



CEO of a Chinese multinational corporation, Ching purchased Iris from the facility when she was a teenager. Using her as a bodyguard as well as a killer and his personal concubine, he carved out an empire for himself in legitimate businesses, as well as among organized crime groups in China and Japan. Involved with illegal oil pipelines as well as drug and weapon sales, Ching underestimated Iris' morality and overestimated her loyalty...and eventually fell victim to her after he tried to execute her.

### Duncan Villone



Seemingly a benign technology mogul, Duncan Villone invested heavily in brain research and discovered a way to control people's minds. Using this technology, Villone purchased a number of Executive Assistants and surgically implanted chips in their brain so he could control all their actions. Getting involved with his machinations, Iris gathered a team of her own and brought down Villone's plans, freeing the Executive Assistants in the process.

### Mazutsu



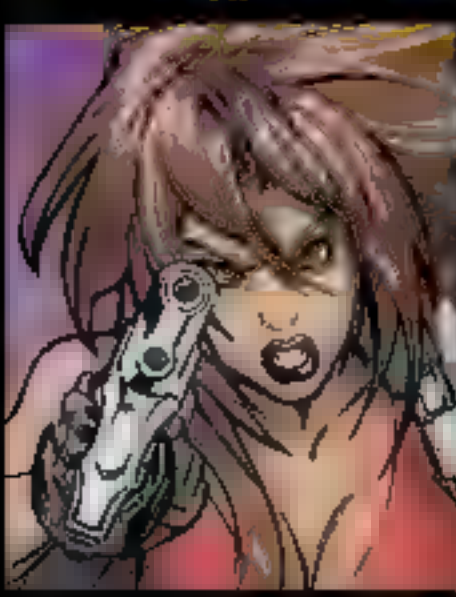
After the death of Ching, there was a void in the Asian underworld as gangs vied for power again— that was brutally filled when Mazutsu arrived to take the reins. Although a successful president of a vast corporate empire spanning the world of intelligence and technology, Mazutsu was really a gangster thug wearing the cultured suit of a businessman. With no regard for ethics or mercy, Mazutsu waged a vicious campaign against the Executive Assistants with the help of one of their own—Rose.

### Lotus



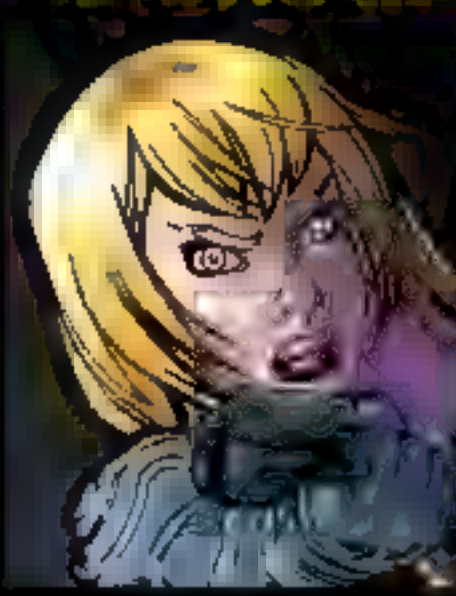
Lotus was born into a wealthy family living in Alwar, India. Abandoned by her mother when the girl was just two years old, Lotus, née Rani, was raised by her father, a professional assassin. Even at an early age, Lotus was proficient with technology and gadget-creation, but her father believed that only through training in the "family business" would she remain safe in the world. When Lotus was a young adult, her father was killed by a rival known as Tiger, who revealed herself as Lotus' mother. The two battled, and Lotus defeated Tiger using a combination of skills her father taught her and the tech savvy she was born with. Now, she has assumed her position in the family business, but her paths have crossed with Iris and other Executive Assistants, pooling their vast skills to fight for the greater good.

### Orchid



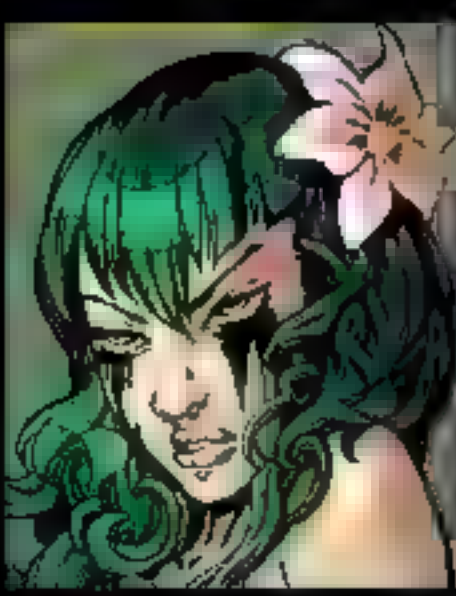
Trained at the Latin American Executive Assistant school, Orchid embraced her training and education with an undaunted passion. Born and trained in Columbia, her personality was perfect for that chapter of the school, which eschews etiquette classes in favor of increased will-strengthening exercises as well as more advanced Jiu Jitsu techniques. Orchid hoped to make a difference in the world, so when her first charge was the son of a local drug lord, she quickly grew disillusioned. Ultimately, she turned on her fellow assistants in the battle against Duncan Villone, and there, secured her fate.

### Violet



Violet is one of a very small number of Executive Assistants whose mother, Aster, is one as well. Entering the posh London school at a very young age, Violet embraced her upbringing, that while rigid, was significantly more cordial than the often brutal training Iris and her cohorts endured during their tenure at the Chinese school. Although she sometimes wondered if she should have enjoyed a more subdued life, Violet served her conscience and her employers with the zeal that all Executive Assistants possess up until her untimely death.

### Lily



A fellow student at the school where Iris was trained, Lily was one of its best and most confident fighters until she was defeated by Iris in the ring. This set off a chain reaction that ruined Lily's life there. Rather than become an Executive Assistant for a businessman, she was sold into prostitution in Tokyo, where she became a drug addict. Her life changed after a chance encounter with Iris empowered Lily to rebel against her gangster-pimp, killing him, and saving Iris' life. Since that time, the two worked together several times, but Lily never lost the pessimism that pervaded her life.

### Diane Coverdale



Married to one of the most successful businessmen in the world, Diane Coverdale took the helm of his vast empire after he was assassinated under mysterious circumstances. Knowing she needed the best protection money could buy, she acquired the Executive Assistant Acteia for protection. But even her brash protector couldn't prevent Coverdale from succumbing to the machinations of Duncan Villone, who took Coverdale's company, and then used her mind-controlled Executive Assistant to take Diane's life.

*Executive Assistant: Iris created by David Wohl, Brad Foxhoven & Michael Turner*

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THIS IS SHANGHAI, CHINA.  
THE FASTEST GROWING CITY  
IN THE FASTEST GROWING  
COUNTRY IN THE WORLD.

TO WHAT DO I  
OWE THIS PLEASURE,  
MISTER KRILOV?

WITHIN THESE  
BUILDINGS,  
THOUSANDS OF  
DEALS ARE  
CONSUMMATED  
EVERY DAY...

...RESULTING IN  
BILLIONS OF DOLLARS  
CHANGING HANDS.

I WISH I HAD  
BETTER NEWS, MISTER  
CHING. BUT IT APPEARS THAT  
THE GOVERNMENT OF BELARUS  
HAS NULLIFIED ALL FOREIGN  
INVESTMENTS, INCLUDING THOSE  
DEVOTED TO THE CONSTRUCTION  
OF THE PIPELINE THAT YOU  
HAVE SO GENEROUSLY  
SUBSIDIZED.

HOW UNFORTUNATE.  
SURELY THERE MUST  
BE SOMETHING I CAN  
DO TO PROTECT MY...  
INTERESTS THERE.

PERHAPS THERE IS A  
WAY I CAN HELP.. GIVEN  
THE PROPER INCENTIVE...  
SAY, PERHAPS, 500,000  
EUROS TO WHET  
MY BEAK.

SINCE WE ARE A  
CIVILIZED NATION,  
THESE TRANSACTIONS  
USUALLY OCCUR  
WITHOUT INCIDENT.

BUT SOMETIMES,  
LESS THAN SAVORY  
INDIVIDUALS FEEL  
THE NEED TO TAKE  
ADVANTAGE OF  
HONEST  
BUSINESSMEN.

OF COURSE.  
THANK YOU, MISTER  
KRILOV. I'LL BE  
IN TOUCH.

AND WHEN HE IS UNABLE TO  
TURN TO HIS GOVERNMENT,  
OR TO THE POLICE, THE  
HONEST BUSINESSMAN HAS  
BUT ONE RECOURSE...

...AND WE SERVE OUR  
EMPLOYERS' INTERESTS  
WITH HONOR.



BORN AN ORPHAN, I WAS  
TAKEN FROM A DISMAL LIFE  
ON THE STREETS OF A POOR  
VILLAGE NEAR WUHAN, CHINA,  
AND BROUGHT HERE...

...TO MÈI RÓNG XUÉ XIÀO, OR THE  
ACADEMY, AS THEY CALLED IT.

THE ACADEMY PROVIDED GIRLS LIKE  
ME WITH AN OPPORTUNITY IN A NATION  
THAT HAD ALREADY FORSAKEN US.

LIVING THERE  
WAS NEVER EASY.

OUR TEACHERS REQUIRED  
STRICT DISCIPLINE.

MISTAKES WERE  
NEVER TOLERATED.

BUT THE EDUCATION  
WE RECEIVED WAS  
UNPARALLELED.

AND THOSE OF US WHO  
PERSEVERED WERE REWARDED  
WITH EMPLOYMENT.



AS AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, I  
AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING  
EFFICIENCY AND STABILITY OF  
MY ORGANIZATION.

I AM ALWAYS  
METICULOUS.

I AM ALWAYS  
JUDICIOUS.

I, ALONE, AM RESPONSIBLE FOR  
KEEPING MY EMPLOYER SAFE...

...AND CONTENT.







IRIS, I'D  
LIKE SOME  
TEA.

OF COURSE,  
SIR.

AND PLEASE  
SEND MISTER KRILOV  
MY WARMEST  
REGARDS.

OF COURSE,  
SIR.



KABUL, AFGHANISTAN.  
WEDNESDAY.

SO, MISTER  
CHING, I TRUST  
YOU'RE ENJOYING  
YOUR TIME IN OUR  
FAIR COUNTRY?

THIS IS FRANCIS WAI-HONG  
CHING. PRESIDENT AND  
CEO OF CHINGCORP.



THE TRUTH,  
MISTER SAFIN?

OF COURSE,  
MY FRIEND.

FRANKLY I FIND  
YOUR CITY AND ITS  
PEOPLE QUITE  
DISTASTEFUL.

AND I WORRY  
THAT I WILL NEVER  
GET THE STENCH OF  
KABUL OFF OF MY  
CLOTHES.

<IRIS. TEA.>\*

ONE OF THE SECRETS OF MY EMPLOYER'S  
SUCCESS IS THAT HE'S WILLING TO GO TO  
PLACES THAT OTHERS WON'T DARE.

THAT FEARLESS PHILOSOPHY HAS  
HELPED BUILD CHINGCORP INTO A MULTI-  
BILLION DOLLAR MULTI-NATIONAL  
CORPORATION WITH OFFICES ON SIX  
DIFFERENT CONTINENTS.



MY EMPLOYER.

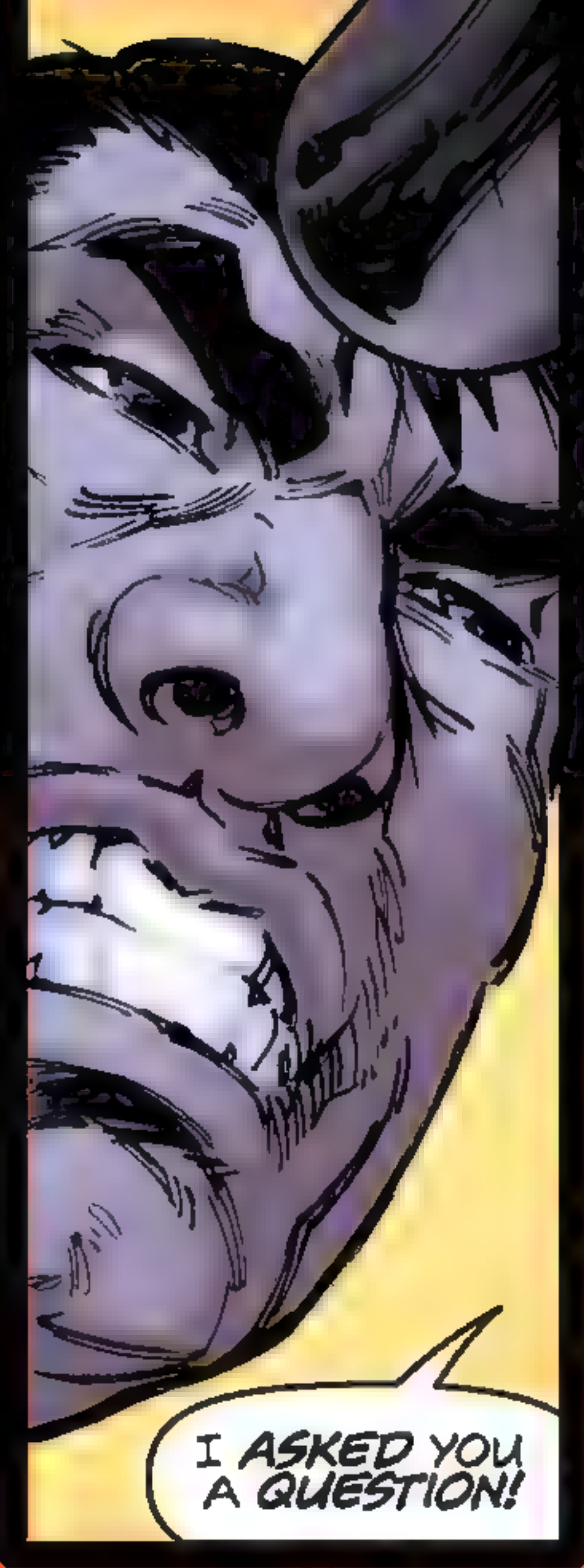
HAHAHA!  
YOU'RE AN  
ENTERTAINING  
MAN, MISTER  
CHING. I BELIEVE  
I SHALL ENJOY  
DOING  
BUSINESS  
WITH YOU.

\*TRANSLATED  
FROM CHINESE  
MANDARIN.\*

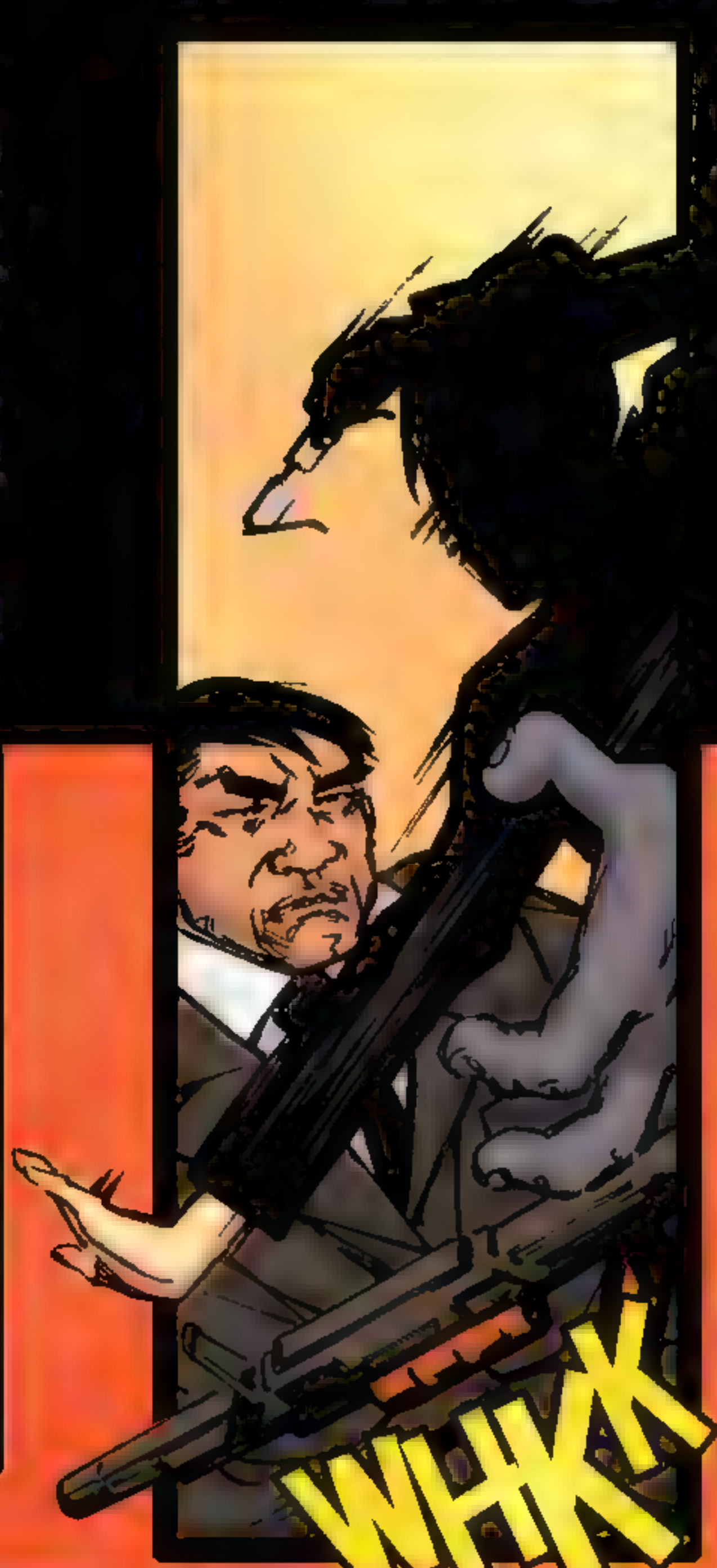








I ASKED YOU  
A QUESTION!



WHXX

MY PRIMARY TASK IS  
TO ENSURE HIS SAFETY.



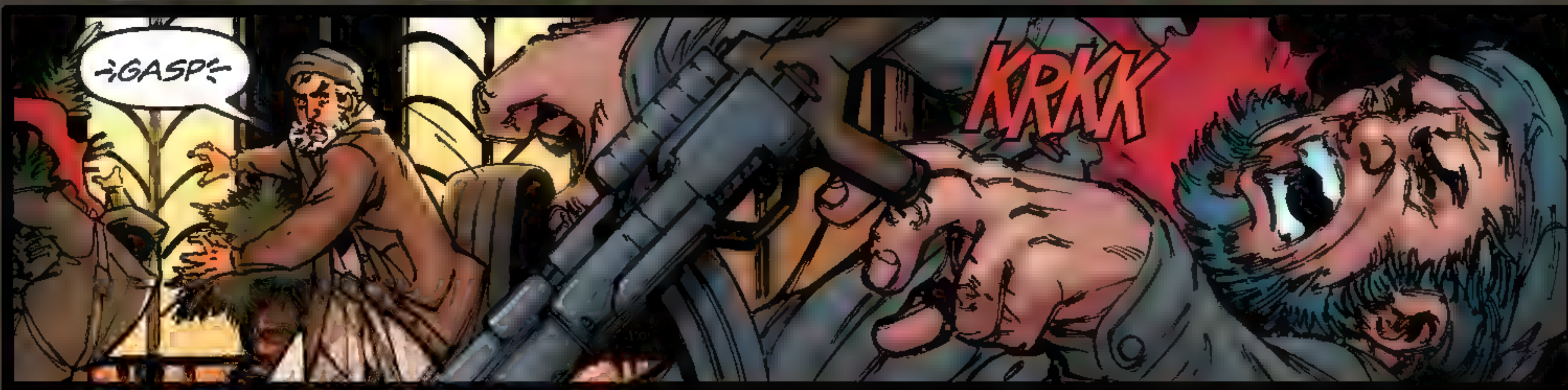
THUMP





AND I TAKE IT VERY SERIOUSLY.





READ MORE IN THE PAGES OF

EXECUTIVE  
ASSISTANT

IRIS #1

ON SALE NOW!



# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: IRIS Volume 2



Acteia, a new Executive Assistant, emerges following the assassination attempt on a powerful widow, Diane Coverdale. The wealthy businesswoman decided her protection was inadequate, and in Dubai, purchased the contract of Acteia following her decisive victory in a competitive death match. Little did the pair know about Iris' involvement in the assassination attempt in service of coercing Coverdale to beef up her personal security.

The pairing was a success, as Acteia forcefully removed any semblance of danger from Coverdale's visible public life. However, the young and exuberant executive assistant was ambushed and subsequently incapacitated at Coverdale's mansion by Iris in the dead of night.

Awakening in a secret underground facility, Acteia quickly used her wits and deadly acumen to overwhelm her guards and surveillance. However, upon reaching the surface, she was shocked to

discover she was in fact held captive on an exotic beach mansion, in the company of executive assistants Iris and Rose.

In private, Acteia would discover a surgical scar on the back of her neck leading her to question more than simply her geographical location. Later, she would be introduced to the owner of the mansion, billionaire magnate, Duncan Villone, as he hosted the assassins at a beachside dinner. Villone informed her of his intent to utilize the executive assistants to secure his global machinations—including Acteia.

That night, the captive Acteia decided to take matters into her own hands by infiltrating Villone's bedroom suite and holding him at gunpoint. Yet, he was able to gain the upper hand on her and force her exit to the mansion grounds—where she was greeted by the arrival of Iris and Rose ready to fight.

The pair of seasoned executive assistants was able to overwhelm the overmatched Acteia, but Villone appeared and surprisingly allowed her to leave on her own accord.

But, Villone's power play was only just the beginning, as he would later appear at Coverdale Industries' board meeting in an attempt to purchase a majority stake in the company. Coverdale resisted the overture but agreed to further negotiate with Villone at his penthouse suite in Las Vegas.

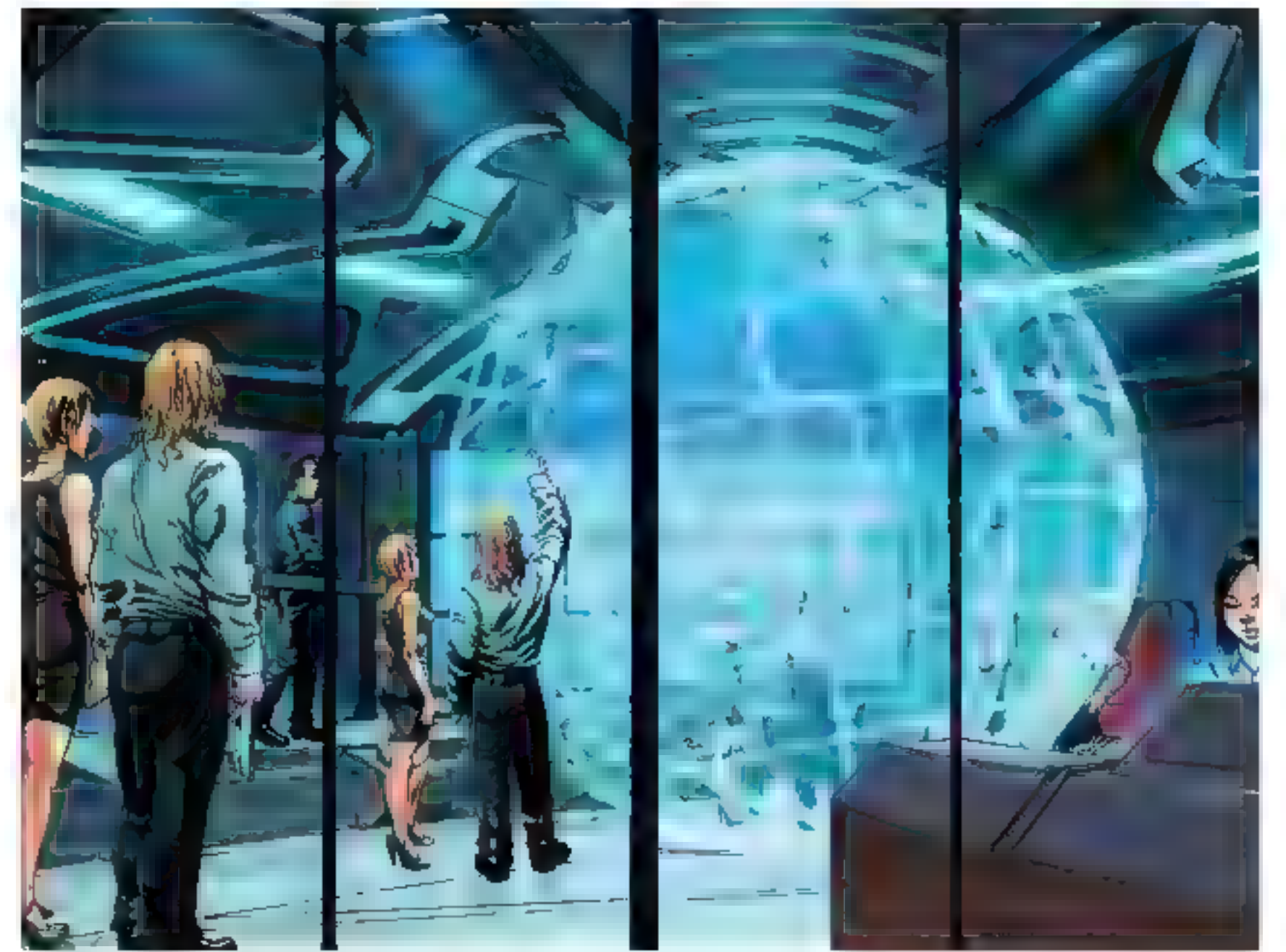
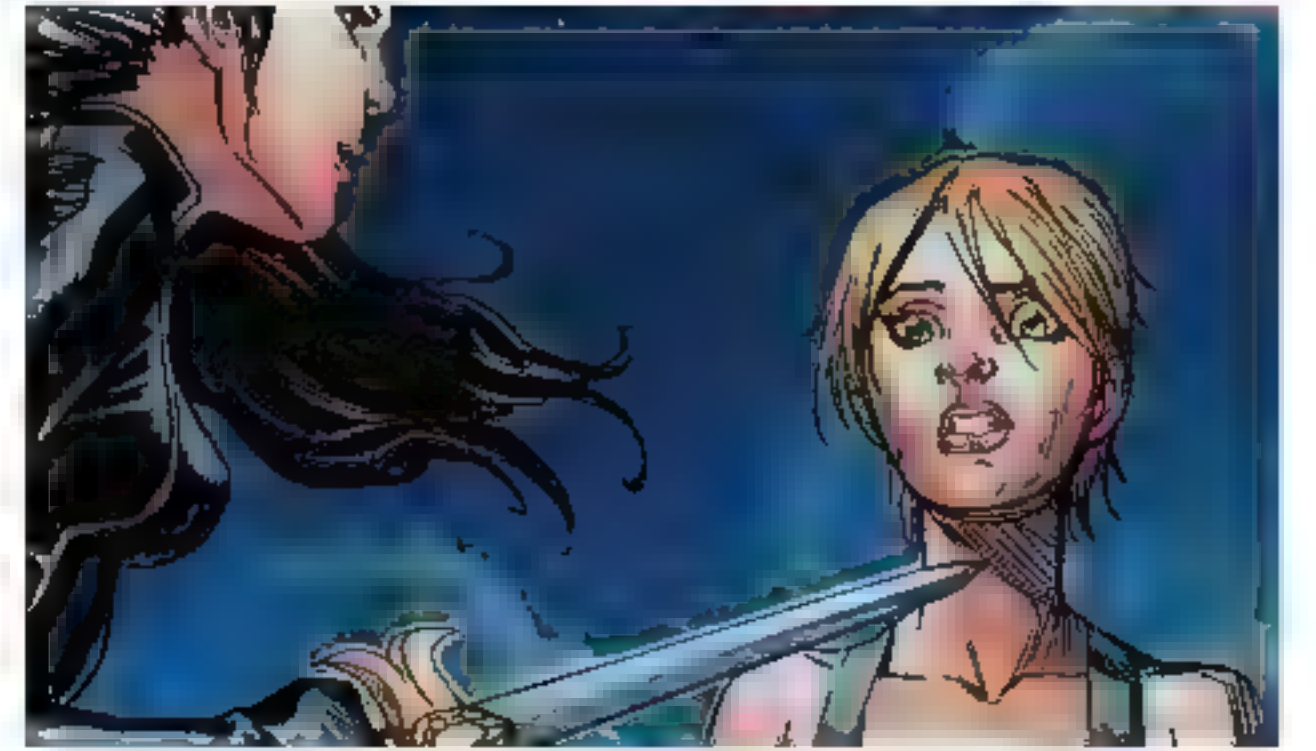


subdued by Rose's commands and the chip still implanted in her. Rose commanded Iris to personally wait alongside the bomb as its timer counted down.

Rose and Juniper escaped the Velchem plant but unaware to them was the arrival of Executive Assistants Lotus and Violet, who managed to knock out Iris and take her to safety. The pair helped Iris surgically remove the chip implanted in her that controlled her actions, and the group stormed Villone's island hideout for retribution.

The group of Villone victims, including Lotus, Orchid, Violet and Lily, attempted to storm the beachfront mansion but the sheer amount of Villone's security was too much even for the group of Executive Assistants, as they were taken prisoner.

In a final standoff, Villone killed his own executive assistant, Juniper, for her indiscretions. But, unbeknownst to him, Rose was no longer under his control, and once she found the opportunity, she turned on her employer by stabbing him in the stomach, killing him.



The negotiation, however, turned out to be a bloodbath, as Coverdale continued to resist Villone's offer, to fatal results. Villone used his mysterious control over Acteia to force her to murder her employer by gunshot. Following Coverdale's death, Acteia appeared to show visible remorse, and so Villone ordered Iris to slay Acteia.

Following a chance encounter with Executive Assistant Orchid at a rooftop gala, Iris was warned by her not to trust Villone or the device implanted in her neck. Iris began to doubt her role in the group's activities, and soon planned her escape during a Villone mission to bomb a Velchem Chemical plant. Inside the plant, Iris turned on Villone's new executive assistant, Juniper, but was



Executive Assistant: Iris v2 TPB in stores NOW!



# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: IRIS Volume 3



Iris found herself in the employ of a new businessman, John Wheeler, although she was not fond of his naiveté in matters of his own personal security. Following an attack on his limousine in which Iris saved his life, she was taken into custody by the NYPD. Iris was taken to a remote facility, where it was revealed that she was in fact working for the CIA's, Agent Dawson, to gather intel on Wheeler in exchange for avoiding prison time.

Upon returning to Wheeler's residence, Iris was dismayed to discover that his girlfriend had been murdered by Rose, who shockingly greeted Iris. The pair rekindled their relationship by fighting to the death, but Iris managed to gain the upper hand in combat and forced Rose to reveal the whereabouts of her employer before releasing her into the CIA's custody.

Wheeler was kidnapped by the perpetrator of the limo attack, a man named Tzetomir Ivanov. The Bronx Zoo was the scene of Ivanov's staged execution of Wheeler, as he set a trap for Iris to rescue him. When Iris arrived, Ivanov's thugs were dispatched by her capable hands, but he had one surprise in store for her—Executive Assistant Jasmine.

Iris and Jasmine fought briefly, but the arrival of the CIA put an end to the skirmish. Back on the Lower East Side, Iris met up with Agent Dawson where she learned Rose was let loose by the authorities due to her connection to the world's leading arms dealer, Mazutsu. Learning that Rose had fled to India, Iris decided to follow.

In India, Iris arrived just in time to rescue Lotus, Orchid and Lily before Rose was able to kill them. The group interrogated Rose but were ambushed by the arrival of Executive Assistant Ivy, who quickly overwhelmed the group with her impressive fighting tactics. Ivy took Rose and left the group defeated.

Iris caught a charter flight back to the States courtesy of The Agency, but upon her arrival on U.S. soil, she was taken into custody by the Deputy Director of the CIA, Charles Murphy. The Director warned Iris not to involve herself in matters of Mazutsu or Wheeler, leaving Iris stranded on the side of the road. Yet, Agent Dawson defied her orders by picking up Iris and helping her.

Dawson believed Wheeler was still in danger from Ivanov and sent Iris to protect the businessman at his government-assigned safe-house. The safe house was soon attacked by Ivanov's thugs along with Jasmine. Iris and Jasmine fought each other, and Iris subdued her long enough to be taken into custody by the Police.

Iris learned of the murder of her old foe-turned-ally Lily, at the hands of Mazutsu, and soon found herself in Tokyo. There, Iris shockingly met with Rose, who was fired by Mazutsu and put on notice for her own death warrant. The two



reluctantly formed a truce to avenge Lily's death. However, the rest of the executive assistants were not pleased at the new alliance with their former adversary, Rose.

The team, along with a now-turned Ivy, attacked Mazutsu at his corporate headquarters, but he was able to flee before his capture. Yet, Rose later located him at his secret temple that she knew about due to her work for him. Rose took it upon herself to personally impale Mazutsu with her dagger, killing him. As well, she tried to turn on Iris once again, only to be stabbed first and left to bleed out and die.

Later, the ladies visited the cemetery to pay their last respects to Lily's gravesite.



Executive Assistant: Iris v3 TPB in stores NOW!



# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: IRIS Volume 4



Iris returned to Wuhan, China, the site of her upbringing and training as an executive assistant. There, she met with a businesswomen, Maly Ang, who was holding tryouts for her security detail. Iris' presence forced the other candidates to flee en masse out of intimidation—except one, Executive Assistant Snapdragon. The two clearly did not see eye-to-eye, but agreed to follow Ang to The Purple Blossom to prove their mettle to her in person.

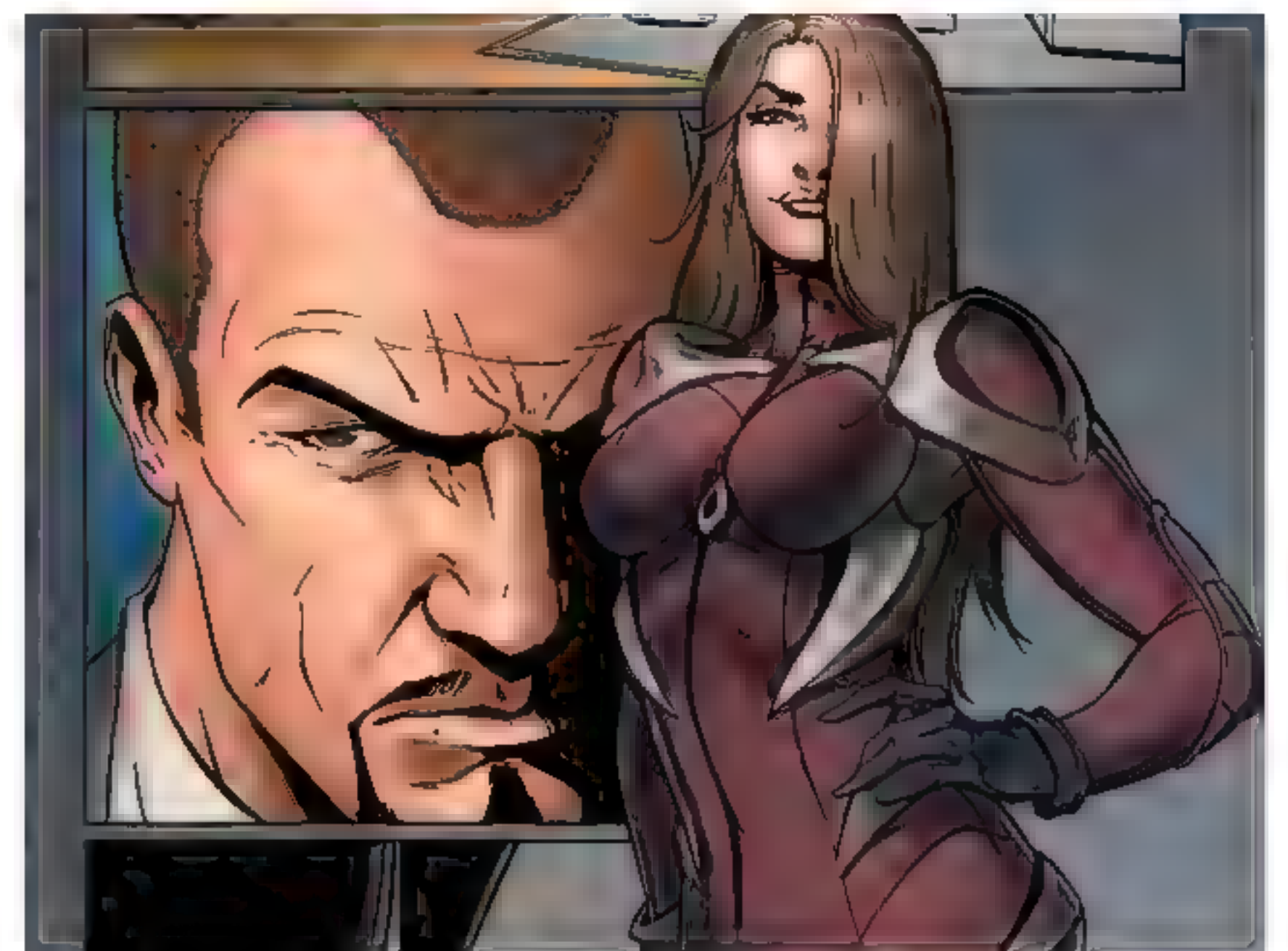
At the club, Ang met with a set of businessmen that refused to acknowledge her place in the pecking order beneath her mentor Han Li Shao, leading to a pistol standoff. Iris and Snapdragon quickly went to work, disbanding their enemies. A witness caught the fight on her smart phone and was nearly killed by Snapdragon before Iris intervened, saving the young lady. Iris found herself at odds with Ang's reckless methods and removed herself from the candidacy.



Later, at The Wuhan Academy, Ang approached Iris to reveal that she knew Shao had set her up, to which Iris divulged that she also knew about the betrayal. Yet, the pair was ambushed and surrounded by Shao and his mercenaries. It was discovered that Ang was honor bound to Shao as an Executive Assistant and as a former lover, and bore him a daughter out of wedlock. Ang hid the young girl in her academy.

Iris managed to get the jump on Shao and held him at knifepoint, but the odds were not in her favor due to Shao's army of mercs, so he was able to escape. Meanwhile, Iris made the fateful decision to get involved in the lover's quarrel in order to save the life of the young girl. Armed with a photo of her, Iris raced to intercept Shao's henchmen before they could identify and take out the girl. Iris was successful and managed to escape with her before Shao's men could stop them.

Back at the home of Shao, he was visited by someone looking to even the odds—Snapdragon. The executive assistant took Shao up on his offer of ten million for the bounty on Iris' head.



The young girl, Cherry Blossom, and Iris did not get off to a good start together, as the stubborn Cherry refused to go along with Iris. Leading Iris on a chase through the water and a local mall, the pair ran headfirst into Snapdragon and more of Shao's men. A fight ensued, but Iris used her extraordinary talents to ensnare one of Shao's helicopters in the air and used it to escape along with Cherry.

Iris prepared to hand-off Cherry to Ang but was surprised instead by the Cambodian Triad, in the company of Snapdragon. The triad used a stun gun to incapacitate Iris and take Cherry, offering her up on the open market to the highest bidder.

For her part in the acquisition, Snapdragon was allowed to take Iris and soon forced her to fight in open combat. This turned out to be an ill-fated decision, as Iris eventually defeated her and beheaded the overconfident Snapdragon.

At the Shao-Ang Green Tower, Ang and Shao quarreled over the future of their daughter as Iris

arrived to settle the score. However, Maly dropped a bombshell on Iris as she explained that the contract she signed was actually to protect Cherry as her executive assistant.

Iris tore apart the Chinese underworld in search of Cherry, eventually finding her tied to a bed inside a seedy apartment. With little time to spare, Iris and Cherry narrowly escaped an onslaught of Shao's thugs, but only with the sudden help of Cherry's mother, Maly.

The trio led Shao into an ambush at the Wuhan Academy, using the school as bait while the students were already evacuated. Ang bought them some time by blowing up the academy, and gathering all of the pupils for one final mission, to storm Shao's headquarters. The army of executive

assistants was successful, as Iris managed to impale Shao with her sword during the fight. Yet, she left the final death blow for Maly, as the two lovers shared a final goodbye before she put him out of his misery.

**Executive Assistant: Iris v4 TPB in stores NOW!**





# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: IRIS The Hitlist Agenda

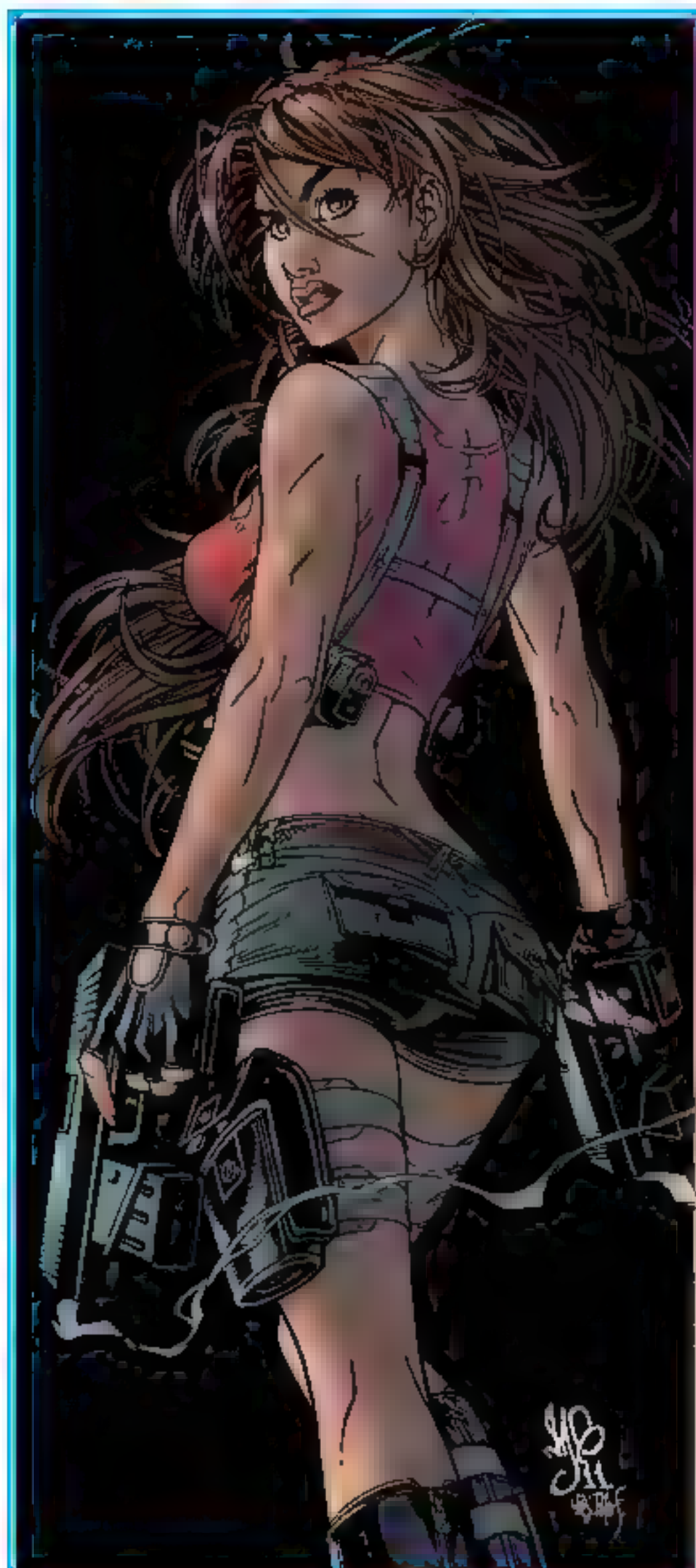


## *Executive Assistant: Lotus*

In Alwar, India, a young lady, Rani, was a wealthy and highly capable assassin by trade. She employed a fatal arsenal of techniques to hit her marks built on the foundation of her technical expertise. However, her actions took a tragic surprise turn one night, when she mistakenly shot the young daughter of her mark, rather than the target, her father, Virat Yadav. As penance for her sins, Rani agreed to become Yadav's executive assistant with the moniker Lotus, in honor of the slain child.

Six months into the job, Rani would come into contact with a powerful businessman, Mr. Ching, and his executive assistant, Iris, by way of Yadav's geopolitical maneuvers. One day during her service to Yadav, the businessman instructed Rani to stay behind while he visited his executive assistant academy in Myanmar to check on his investment. Lotus chose to ignore the order, sensing that something was amiss.

However, the ploy was a trap set by Yadav to ambush Lotus as she shadowed him in Myanmar, as it was learned he never truly forgave her for the slaying of his daughter. Lotus snuck into the academy only to discover a fully-trained group of Executive Assistants waiting to murder her. Yet, Lotus proved her mettle by dispatching of the group of assassins and eventually killing Yadav, and freeing herself of her oath of servitude to him.

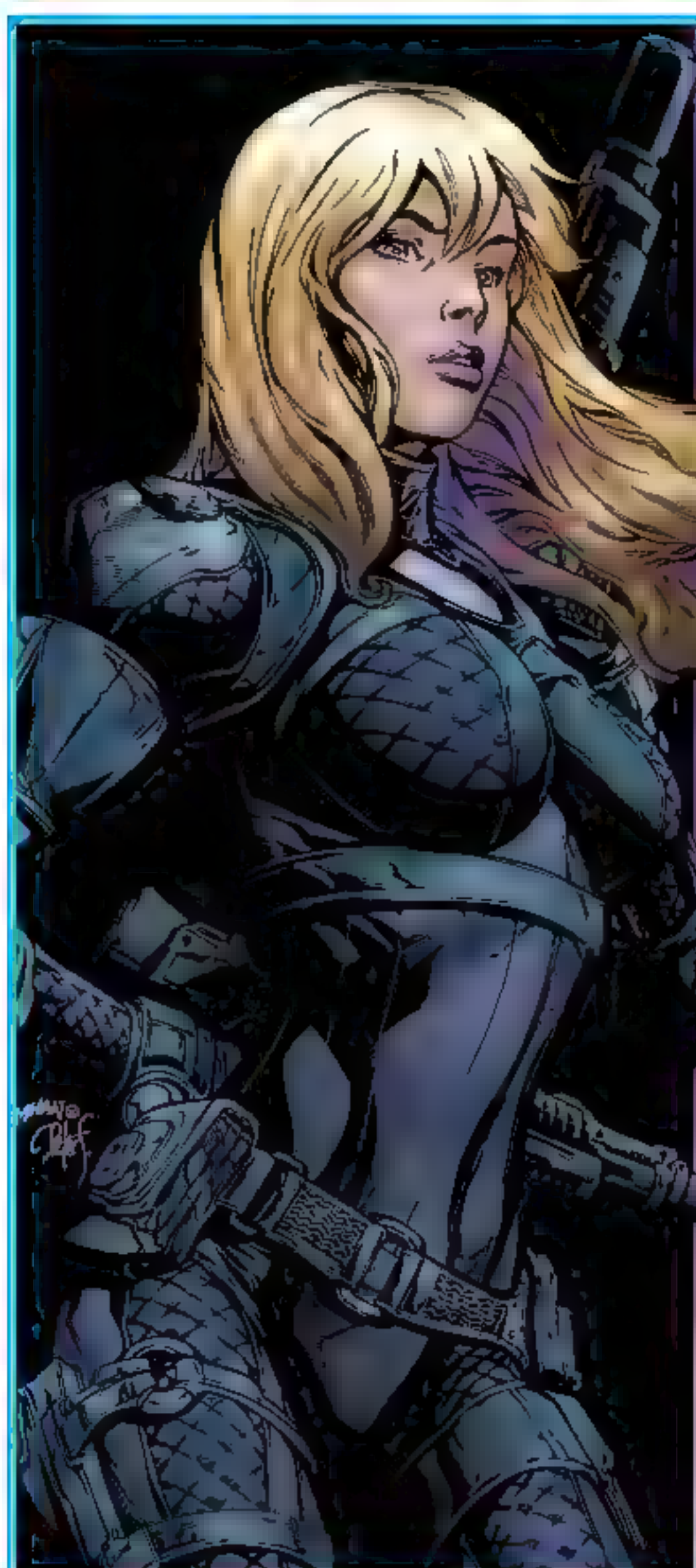


## *Executive Assistant: Orchid*

A hired assassin for the Cordova drug cartel, Executive Assistant Orchid was assigned to protect the family's loose cannon son, Umberto. Orchid performed her tasks with deadly precision, yet the secrets of her past—and the scar on her neck, led many to question her loyalty. She was sent to Dallas, Texas in order to kidnap the head of a powerful conglomerate known as Worldspan, Mr. Vance Upworth.

Upon successful completion of the assignment, the boss of the Cordova family tortured Upworth for intel on a mysterious assassin that was disrupting the family's drug business in bloody fashion. Meanwhile, Orchid was dispatched to an undisclosed location in Texas to murder a high-powered collection of industry titans while Umberto filmed the massacre for proof. Yet, Orchid saved one final surprise for him—as she beheaded the capricious Umberto.

Later awakening at a gas station, Orchid began to recover her own thoughts and memories, but was flooded with emotional conflict. Luckily, she was rescued by Executive Assistant Iris, who uncovered the neural chip that her former employer, Duncan Villone, used to control various executive assistants around the globe. It was revealed that Orchid was, in fact, the mysterious assassin playing both sides. Orchid would extract the chip on her own, and eventually pay vengeance to the head of the Cordova family.



## *Executive Assistant: Violet*

Following the poison homicide of his father, action film star Henry Vincent took it upon himself to acquire the services of a formidable executive assistant, Violet, for impenetrable protection. But, even the safety she provided couldn't shield Vincent from the ire of his late father's company, Velchem, and its board of directors. In the wake of a Velchem factory explosion that was later attributed to Iris under Villone's orders, the board began to feel pressure by eco-friendly activists.

During one heated boardroom session, a squad of hired mercenaries crashed through the windows, attempting to take out Vincent. Violet quickly neutralized the threat, but later was outed to the world via a news crew. One woman that was alerted to her new role was Executive Assistant Aster, Violet's mother.

After a brief reunion of mother and daughter over combat, the pair joined forces in order to save Vincent from the threat attacking Velchem. It was discovered that Duncan Villone was behind the plot, as his attempts to take over Velchem led to him implanting a chip into Violet to control her. Attempting to use her to murder Vincent, Violet resisted and in a surprising turn of events, Vincent saved Violet's life by taking a bullet for her. Later, Violet would threaten Villone with revenge and was visited by two new allies, Executive Assistants Lotus and Orchid.

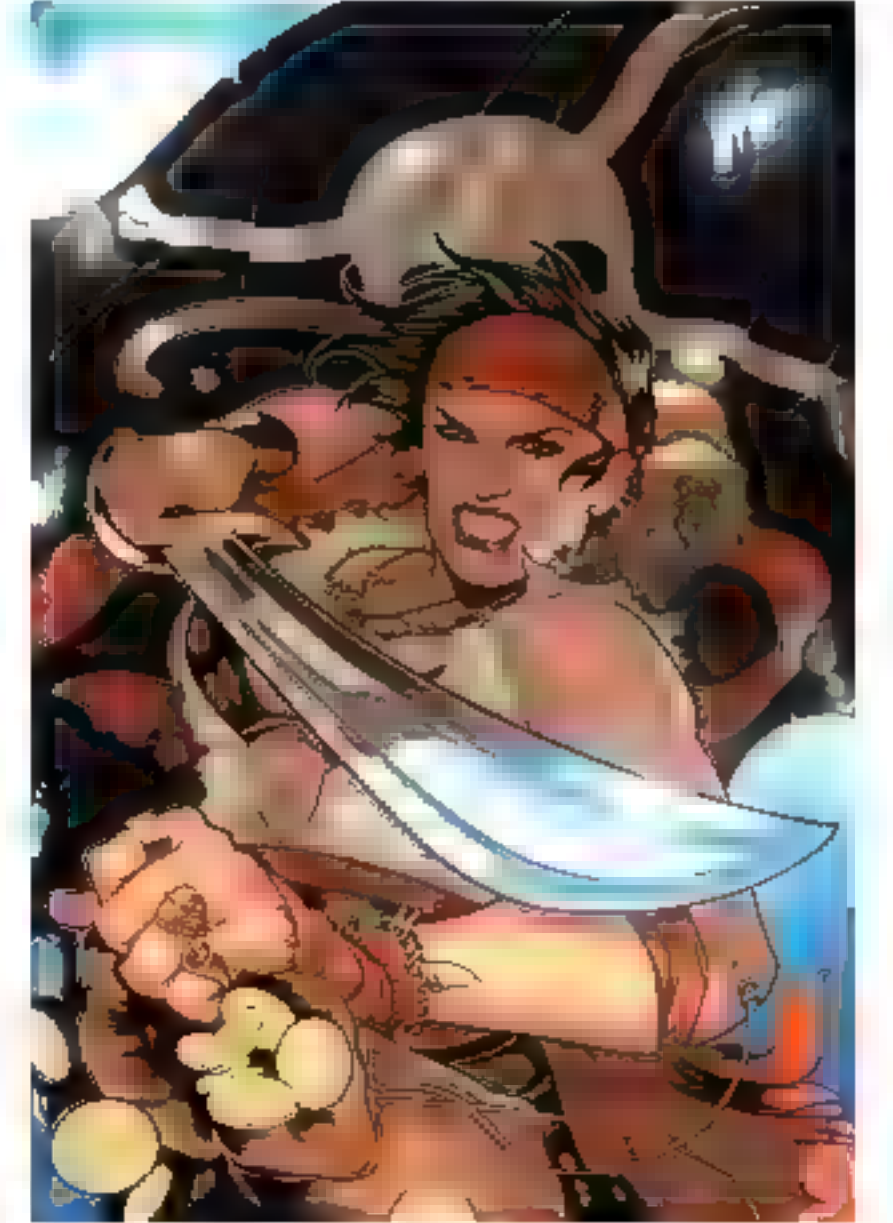


# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: ASSASSINS



***“Life After Death”*** — Executive Assistant Lily found herself at rock bottom, working as a dancer at a seedy nightclub in Shinjuku, Japan. However, her predicament would soon become much worse, as she discovered she was a pivotal pawn in a deadly game of geo-political warfare. After the discovery of her former boss’ role as an informant for the CIA, Lily was soon hunted by the world’s most powerful arms dealer, Mazutsu Sai, a man looking to rid the world of all executive assistants. With the help of an agency ally known as Cope, Lily was able to stave off Mazutsu’s initial wave of attacks but not without great cost—as Cope lost his life in defense of Lily. While she escaped with her life, Lily swore vengeance on Mazutsu.

***“Lost at Sea”*** — Under the flag of the pirate Tikoté, Executive Assistant Sophora was a formidable tool for the ship’s nefarious activities. Sophora had only known a life at The Academy before her introduction to the sea, but she instantly fell for the lure of the tides. However, her dark action would soon lead her to question her role among the band of mercenaries. Even worse, she soon fell for and began a romance with Landon, a young pirate aboard the ship. Catching wind of the illicit affair, the ship’s brutal captain, Tikoté, set a trap for the pair and forced Sophora to shoot her own lover. Unable to do so, she instead shot off his locks and the two of them successfully took command of



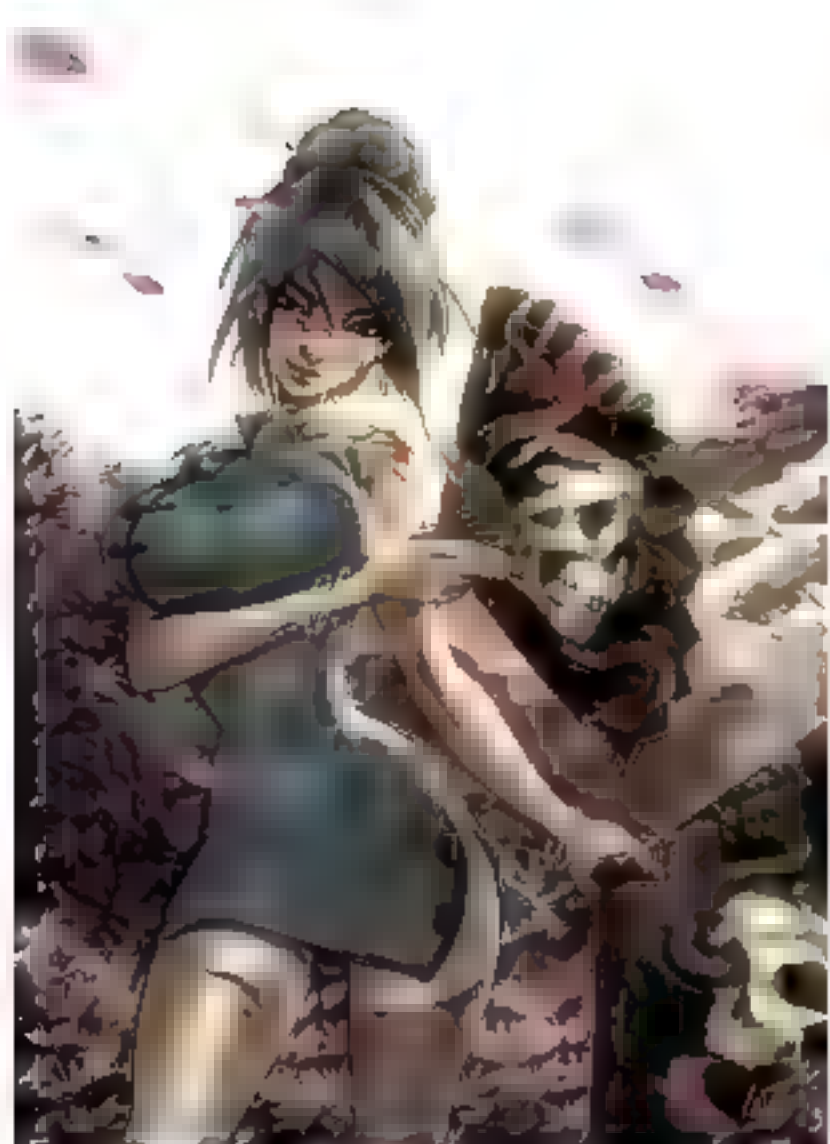
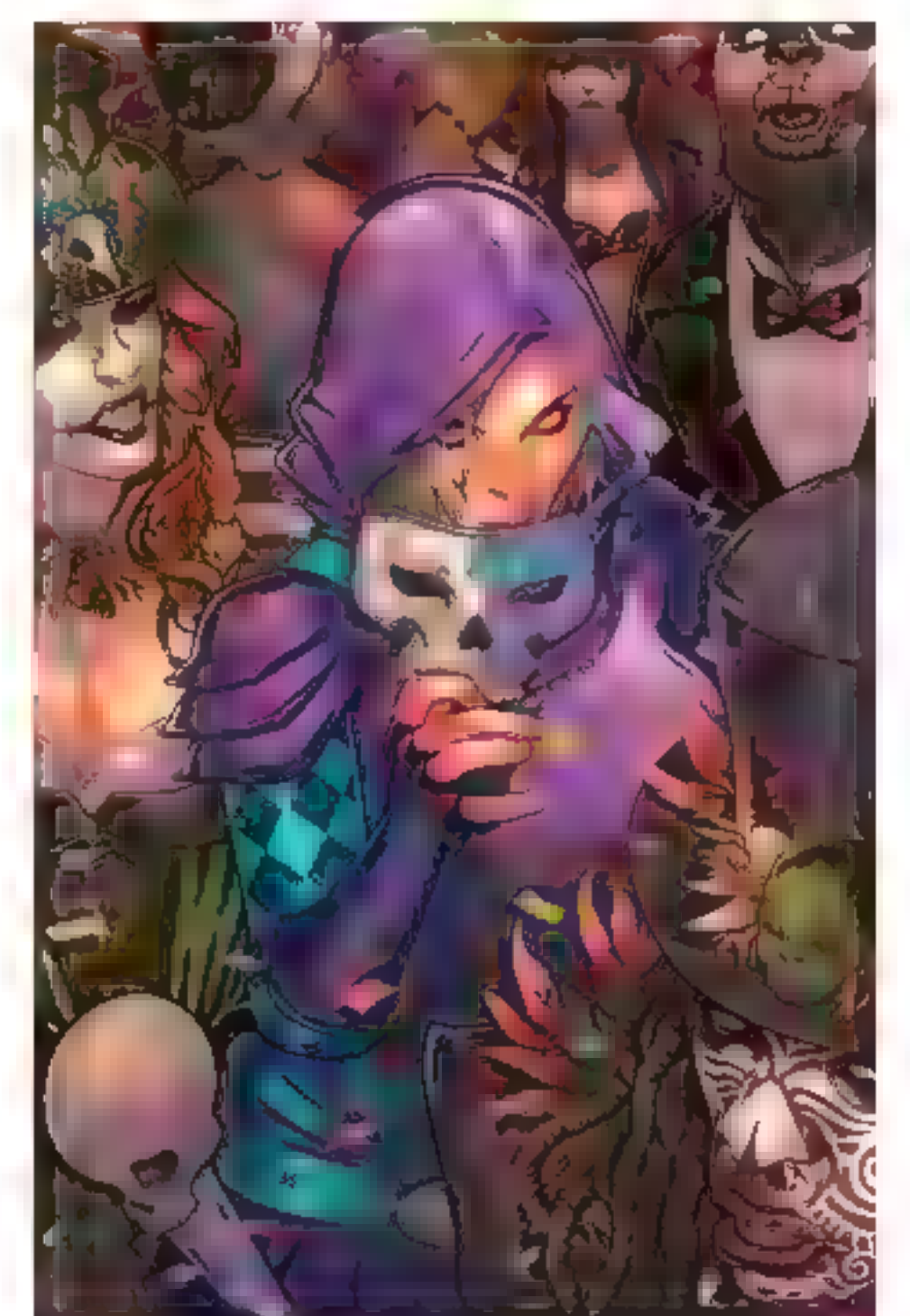
the ship in combat, tossing an unarmed Tikoté into the ocean. Following the battle, Sophora left Landon in order to truly be free.

***“Executive Extinction”*** — Lily took the fight to Mazutsu by locating and assassinating his top assassin, Lilac, but the arms dealer offered little remorse for the loss of yet another disposable weapon, even a human life. Lily soon reunited with Executive Assistant Iris, who revealed her role working with the CIA. Lily fled to India along with Executive Assistants Aster and Orchid in order to recruit Lotus for her considerable wealth and resources. They arrived too late, as Executive Assistant Rose first attacked Lotus before the trio arrived to even the odds. Rose nearly defeated all three by herself before Iris arrived to subdue her. However, the tables turned once more by the surprise arrival of a new Executive Assistant, Ivy, who soon took them all by storm. Yet, the group was able to eventually turn Ivy, and lead Mazutsu to an abandoned warehouse, where a final battle was staged between him and the executive assistants. Rose and Lily fought to the death, but Lily was too much for Rose and eventually gained the upper hand. But, shockingly, as she focused on Rose, Mazutsu shot Lily in the back of the head.



***“Bloodline”*** — Executive Assistant Lotus was raised as “Rani” under the tutelage of her assassin father in India. Yet, her father’s industry was a continual source of danger for the pair, and one night forced them to flee their mansion home and take residence in a safe house. Their safety was anything but, though, as his chief competition known as “The Tiger” soon tracked them down and murdered her father. Rani dedicated her young adult life to training as the greatest assassin and soon made her own name for herself, drawing the ire of The Tiger. Rani was soon attacked in her home by The Tiger, who stunningly revealed to her that she was her long-lost mother. The pair traded assaults before Rani gained the upper hand by planting an explosive device in a family heirloom. With both of her parents out of the picture, Rani grew up fast, with only her pet tiger that she adopted from her murdered mother.

***“Daisy”*** — The young woman, Daisy, lived in the shadow of her controlling father on their plantation. Years of abuse and torment made Daisy mentally unstable, and during one violent altercation with her father, Daisy stabbed him and escaped their home. She made it just far enough to collapse on the doorstep of a black market dealer named Shen. Soon the two fell in love and married, and Shen took Daisy to an Eastern Chinese village and an Executive Assistant Academy to strengthen her resolve. In the Academy, Daisy’s violent tendencies took form as her psychological problems continued to grow. As well, her father still gave chase and hired an assassin to track the pair down and retrieve Daisy. In the ensuing fight, Shen was shot and Daisy’s true violent nature exposed, as she tore the assassin’s eye from its socket before killing him. Returning home, Daisy finally found justice by killing her father. Yet, her sadistic nature was fully realized, as she continues to haunt the streets of New Orleans looking to satisfy her thirst for blood.



***“Blood Origin”*** — Sisters Hana and Mayu grew up in the village streets of Qinghai, China, using their thieving wits to survive. As adults, Hana became a world class fighter and trainer while her older sister Mayu used her talents to become a professional thief. When their childhood friend, Li, is murdered in cold blood, Hana took it upon herself to find the killer. At first, she suspected Li’s competition, the high-powered figure Renshu, but it later turned out he was a friend of Li’s from his past. However, Mayu was arrested for an attempted robbery and Hana was forced to work for Renshu as an executive assistant, Daffodil, in order to take out his rival Zhou Kang and free her sister.

The plan nearly worked as they took up residence in an abandoned temple-turned-training facility. That is, until Hana discovered it was Li’s fiancé from his past, Chun, that was behind a double-cross that involved both Renshu and his rival Kang. Chun was able to get the drop on Mayu and slay her, resulting in Hana finding and killing her in combat. Hana would soon re-establish the academy with the remaining pupils, creating a network of executive assistants that span the globe.

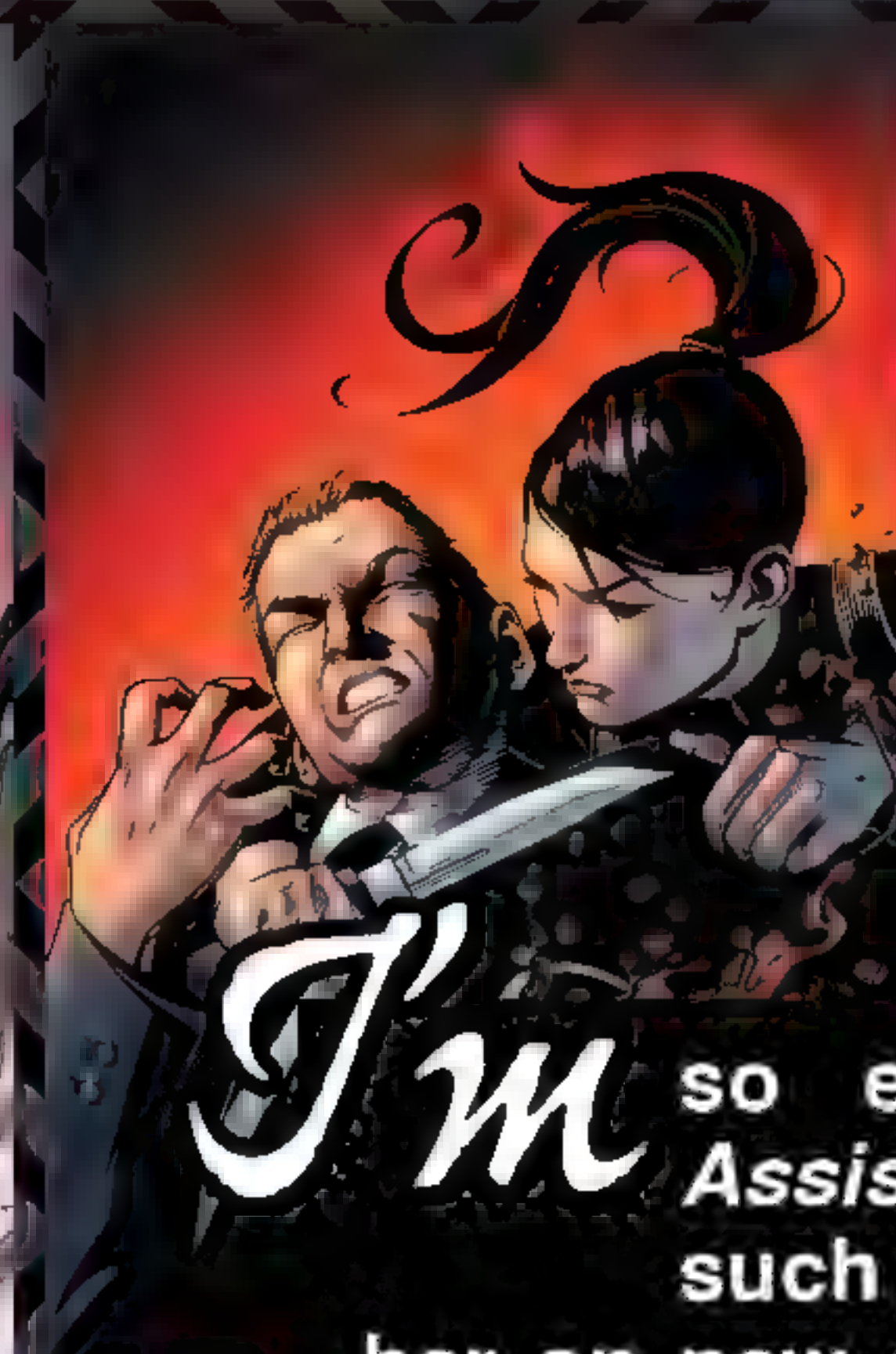
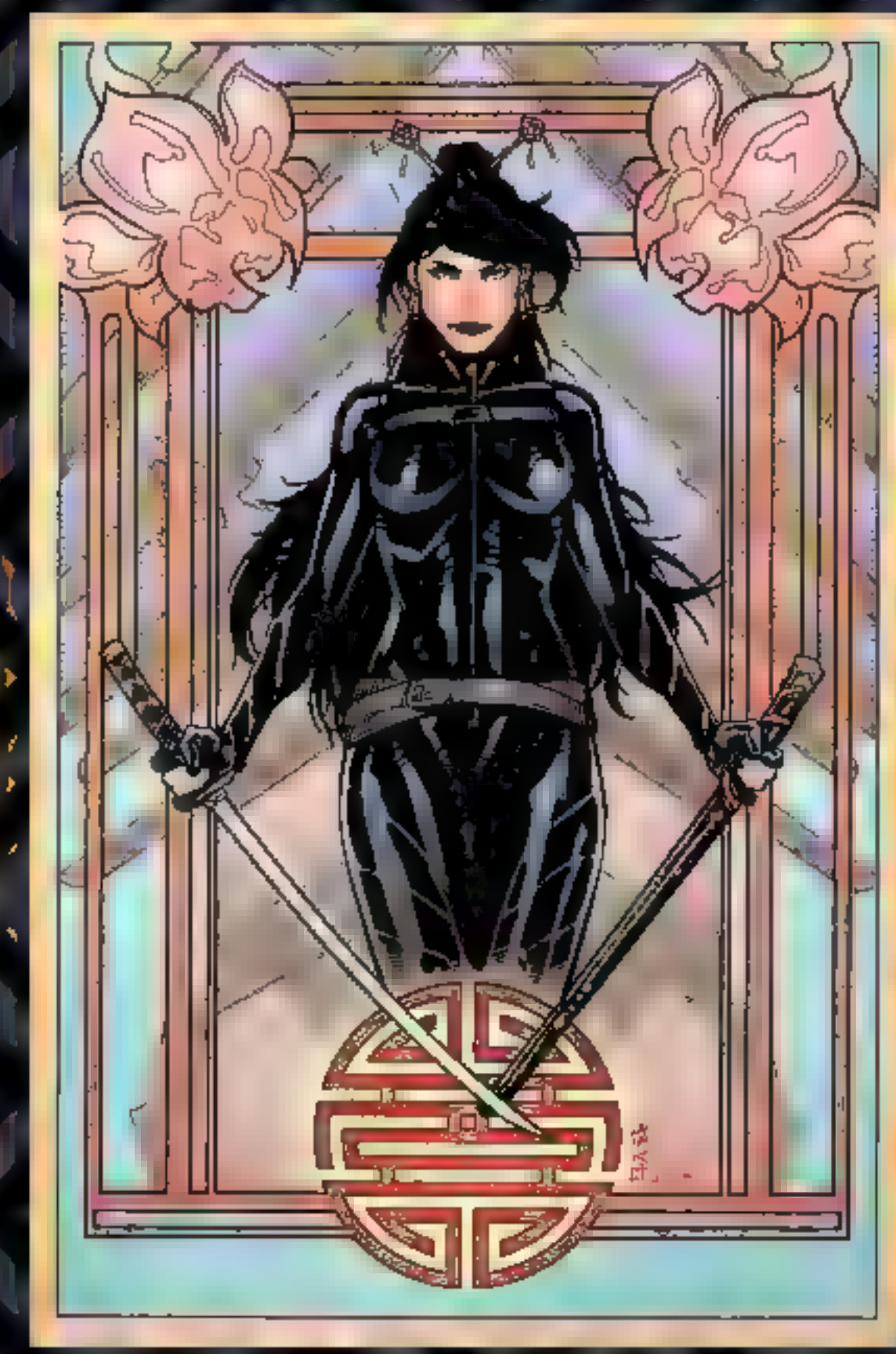
**Executive Assistant: Assassins v1 & v2 TPBs in stores NOW!**



# ALL NEW EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT IRIS

vs

Aspen Comics' hit action-adventure assassin series marks its 10-Year Anniversary with a brand new pulse-pounding volume!



**I'm** so excited about *Executive Assistant: Iris* because she has such a rich legacy, but taking her on new adventures is only part of the upcoming series.

There are so many fantastic stories where a hero returns to action after a lengthy retirement, knowing their best years are behind them. And while that's a great jumping-off point, I couldn't start there because Iris is a long way from hanging up her swords. She's still young, fast, and stronger than ever...but she's acutely aware that someone just a little younger, a little faster, and a little stronger is always lurking around the corner—someone about to come into their prime.



For a combat athlete (like a boxer, or UFC fighter) lagging a split-second behind means being knocked unconscious. But in a world of assassins, the stakes are considerably higher: zigging when you should have zagged won't result in a loss on your record—it results in death.

That's where Iris starts off the new series: questioning her mortality in a time when gods and monsters are being introduced, dramatically changing the landscape.

If you love the action, pacing and world-building of Iris, that's very much intact—but I'm layering in some mystery elements that unfold from month to month, culminating with an epic showdown in the final issue.

Donny Tran has such a precise, meticulous style—it's such a treat to look at. But his real superpower is rendering facial expressions. At a glance you get a sense of what each character is thinking or feeling without having to refer to dialogue balloons. It's uncanny. Aspiring artists should take note.

It's a blast opening my e-mail and seeing new pages as they're completed, because Donny's creative choices—whether it's a camera angle or a little background detail that spices up a page—always blows me away. He's not only a consummate professional, but he brings a lot of joy to the creative process.

This is going to be a run of *Executive Assistant: Iris* like you've never seen before!

—Blake Northcott

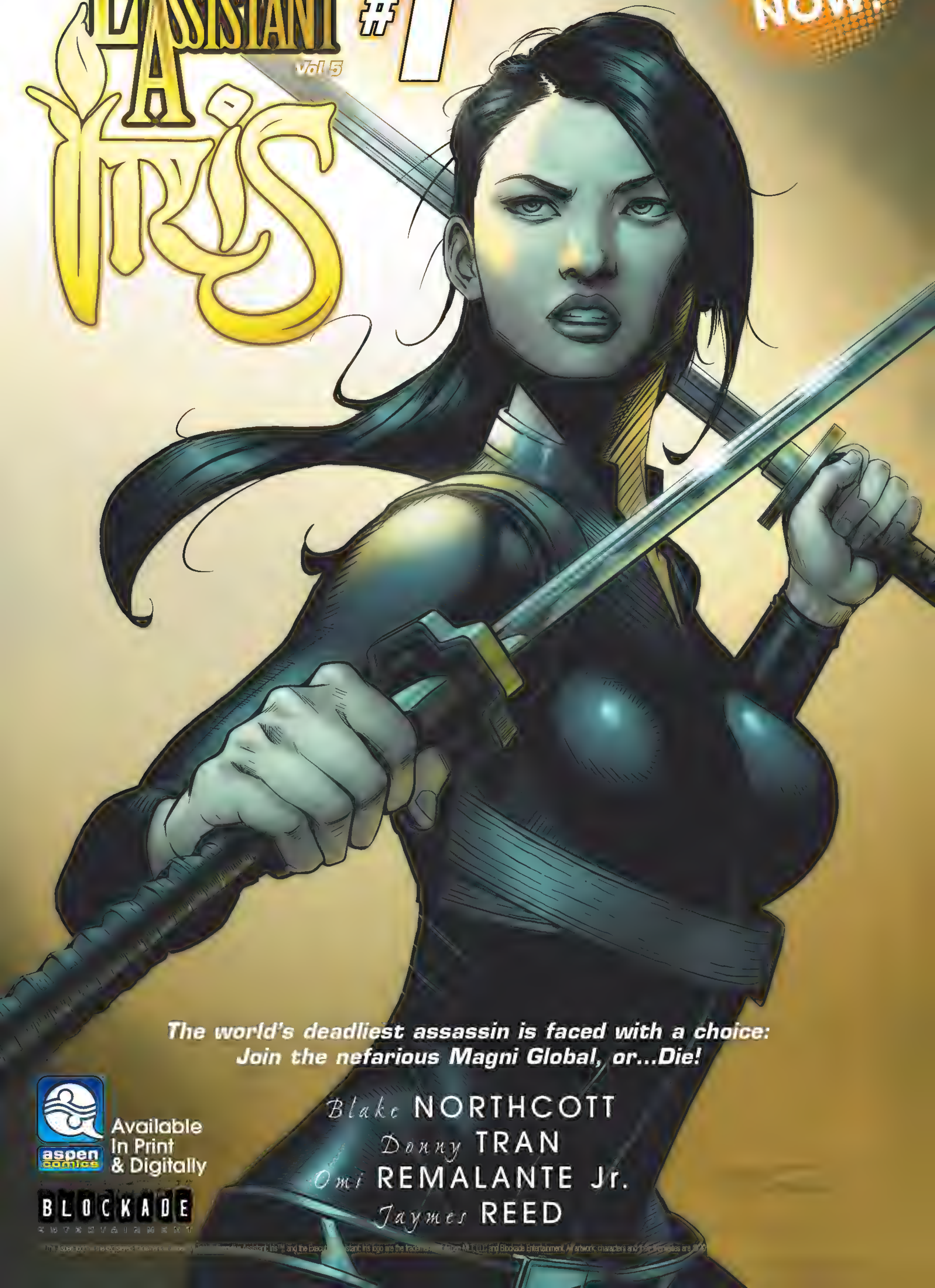


# EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT IRIS

Vol 5

# #1

ON  
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NOW!



*The world's deadliest assassin is faced with a choice:  
Join the nefarious Magni Global, or...Die!*



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Everything you need  
to know about...



VK 15  
BAT  
T





Direct Edition  
by - **V Ken Marion**  
& - **Matt "Bart" Banning**  
& - **Juan Fernandez**

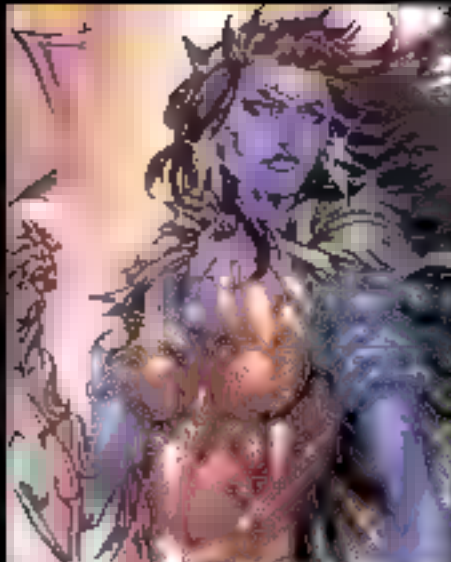
# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

In the thriving kingdom of Janna, a young princess named Ara is raised by her loving parents, King Kenaq and Queen Luna. Her life is one of joy and safety until an invading army led by King Graim storms the kingdom, aided by a mysterious sorcerer named Torinthal with a hidden agenda all his own. During the course of the battle, Luna hides Ara away in a private chamber while she stands against Torinthal and his assailants. Unbeknownst to Ara, Luna reveals her own secret in defending her family. She is a d'jinn, a mystical being from another realm. Luna tries to attack Torinthal, but he has gained possession of her vessel and thus now controls her.

When the assailants discover Ara in hiding, the trauma of her impending doom triggers something in her and for the first time in her life Ara experiences a transformation of her own - becoming something quite other. She's not human. She's not d'jinn. She's something in between, and she's powerful. She defeats the assailants and helps turn the tide of the battle for Janna, saving her kingdom. But, the damage is done. Her mother, the queen, is gone. As her father, King Kenaq, struggles to go on after the devastating loss, Ara takes it upon herself to embark on a quest. For her father, for her kingdom, Ara will find Luna. She will bring the queen home.

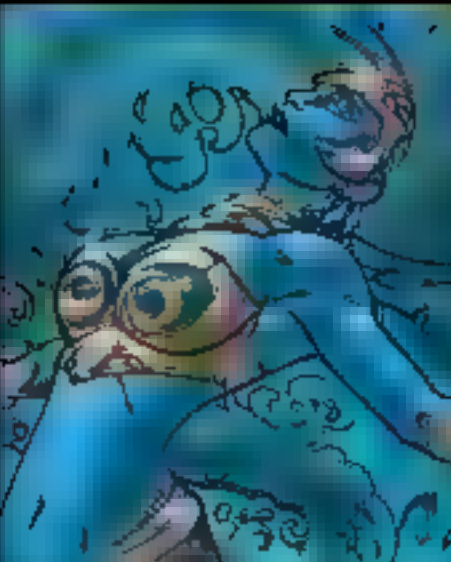
## JIRNI THE MAJOR PLAYERS:

### Ara



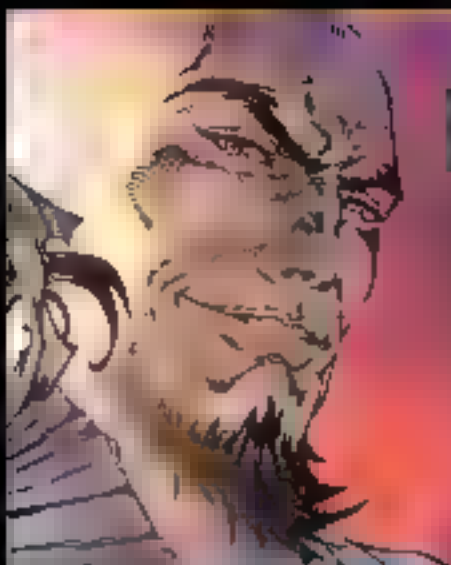
Ara is a princess, a daughter of King Kenaq and Queen Luna, and lived an idyllic existence in the kingdom of Janna. She was loved, cared for, and protected, but all that came crashing down when her mother was kidnapped by an evil sorcerer who knew that she was secretly a d'jinn. When she was put in danger, Ara herself discovered the extent of her own d'jinn heritage, as she transformed into a figure of power and purpose. Now, she has embarked on an epic quest, venturing out beyond her realm in order to find her mother and return the queen to the people of Janna.

### Luna



Luna is a d'jinn, a being of great power, exiled from her celestial realm and fated to obey whoever possesses her mystical vessel. When she first fell to this world, she was discovered by a noble ruler, Warwyk. She served him happily for years, helping him to bring order and peace to his kingdom. Before freeing her from her bondage, he asked for one last wish - that Luna would protect his newborn son, Kenaq. Not only did Luna watch over him, she grew to love him and become his wife and the queen of Janna. But now, her vessel is possessed by another, the evil sorcerer Torinthal, and she is his slave. Her power is his power.

### Torinthal



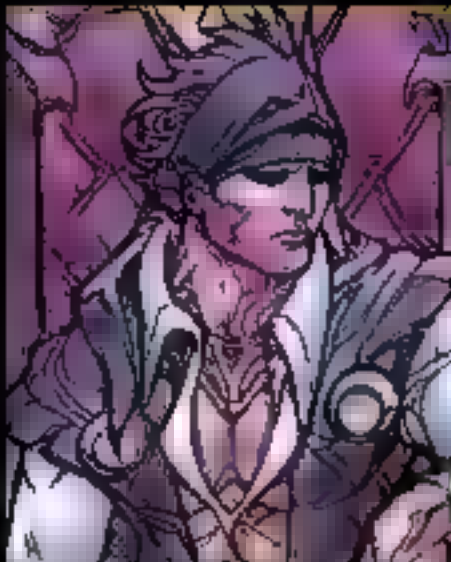
A sinister figure, Torinthal is a sorcerer with a mysterious past and a secret agenda. He holds d'jinn in high regard for their amazing power, but also carries a certain loathing towards them as well. A deep hatred. Not only has he stolen away Luna from her family and her kingdom, Torinthal also has collected other d'jinn. It seems he is amassing an army of them, but for what purpose? That remains to be seen.

### D'Jinn



D'jinn are ethereal beings of great power, who dwell in the celestial realm of Allavon. They live an enlightened existence, spiritually connected to one another. Still, they have laws, and when they are broken, the guilty ones are banished from Allavon. They are exiled to the earthly realm below, imprisoned in a mystical vessel and forced to serve whoever comes to possess it.

### Kenaq



King of Janna, Kenaq ruled with honor along side his queen, LUNA, until she was kidnapped by Torinthal during an attack on the kingdom. During the battle, Kenaq lost his hand and strength of spirit. Now, he sits alone on the throne, overwhelmed by his sorrow, while his daughter, ARA, journeys into the great beyond to bring back Luna and restore the kingdom to its former glory.

### Anjaha



An exiled d'jinn, Anjaha's vessel fell into the hands of Torinthal, forcing him to carry out the sorcerer's cruel demands. Under his control, Anjaha killed and slaughtered many. During an epic battle with Ara, the warrior princess managed to strike his vessel from Torinthal's hand, destroying it in the process - and thus freeing Anjaha from imprisonment. Instead of seeking revenge upon Torinthal for his dominance, A d'jinn merely turned away from the earthly world and returned home to the celestial realm of Allavon.

### Boro



A charismatic captain of the high seas, Boro roams the open waters in his ship, The Far Tide. Pirate to some, lover to others, Boro sees himself as simply a merchant of the world, providing a necessary service. After Ara joined his crew, they shared many an adventure and had something of a romance brewing, until she discovered a dark reality about his trade and they parted ways.

### Mitra, Majeed, Harsooth



A trio of exiled d'jinn, Mitra, Majeed, and Harsooth have come under the control of Torinthal and carry out his wishes, no matter how terrible and destructive.

*Jirni created by J.T. Krul*

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JANNA

YEARS  
EARLIER.

SLOW DOWN,  
ARA. STAY  
WITH ME.

YES,  
MOTHER.

IF MY *QUEEN*  
WOULD PERMIT ME...  
A GIFT FOR THE *PRINCESS*  
IN ANTICIPATION OF HER  
COMING *CELEBRATION*.

A VARIETY  
OF *SPICES* AND  
*INCENSE*. MAY  
THEY LIVE! YOUR  
EVERY DAY.

MMMMM.  
SMELLS  
DELICIOUS.

YOU  
ARE TOO  
KIND.

NO, MY *QUEEN*  
*LUNA*. IT IS MY  
*HONOR*.

SOME OF  
THESE I DON'T  
RECOGNIZE FROM  
THE *ROYAL*  
KITCHEN.

AH, I AM  
PLEASED TO BRING  
SOMETHING *NEW* FOR  
YOU. THERE IS A BIT OF  
*COCHORA ROOT* FOUND  
BEYOND THE *KURKIAN*  
MOUNTAINS. GOOD FOR  
TEAS AND BAKING.

AND *LAVANDRIA*  
IS A FLOWER KNOWN  
ONLY TO GROW IN THE  
FAR-AWAY FORESTS OF  
*TAGARON*. A HEAVENLY  
SCENT FOR A SPECIAL  
OCCASION.

THE FORESTS  
OF *TAGARON*...  
AMAZING.





I SEE YOU  
ARE ENJOYING  
YOUR GIFT.



VERY MUCH.



BUT I WISH  
I COULD SEE THE  
OTHER LANDS THAT  
FEATURE SUCH  
WONDERS...



...EXPERIENCE  
MORE OF OUR  
WORLD.



ALL I  
KNOW IS OUR  
KINGDOM.



YOU ARE A *RESILIENT*  
AND *DETERMINED* CHILD,  
ARA. I HAVE NO DOUBT  
YOU WILL ONE DAY EXPLORE  
EVERYTHING YOUR HEART  
DESIRES.



WHY CAN'T  
SOMEDAY BE  
TODAY?



DON'T BE IN  
TOO MUCH OF A  
HURRY TO GROW UP.  
CAN YOU NOT BE MY  
DAUGHTER FOR A  
LITTLE LONGER?



HERE, I HAVE  
SOMETHING FOR  
YOU AS WELL.



AN  
ARMAND--  
MOTHER... IT'S  
BEAUTIFUL. BUT  
MY BIRTHDAY IS  
STILL DAYS  
AWAY.



I AM AWARE.  
I WAS THERE, TOO.  
REMEMBER?



AND NO DOUBT  
YOUR *FATHER* HAS  
A TREASURE TROVE TO  
BESTOW UPON YOU, BUT  
I WANTED TO GIVE  
YOU THIS MYSELF.



WEAR IT  
ALWAYS AND  
KNOW THAT I  
WILL BE WITH  
YOU.





RAAAWWWRP!

MY LORD  
KENAQ! THAT  
CREATURE IS  
TOO STRONG.  
WE MUST PULL  
BACK!

I'LL NOT  
HIDE FROM *GRAIM*  
AND HIS FORCES-- NO  
MATTER WHAT *DEVILRY*  
HE HAS ENLISTED  
THIS TIME.

WE WILL  
PROTECT  
JANNA...

NOT LONG AFTER,  
THE PEACE OF JANNA  
WAS BROKEN, AS THE  
KINGDOM CAME  
UNDER ATTACK.





MOTHER,  
WHAT IS HAPPENING  
OUT THERE?

WAR, MY  
CHILD. WAR IS  
HAPPENING.

COME,  
ARA. THIS  
WAY.



FATHER  
HAS ALWAYS  
SAID KING GRAIM  
IS *NOTHING* TO  
BE SCARED OF.

GRAIM IS  
NOT *ALONE*  
THIS TIME.



LISTEN TO  
ME. YOU ARE *SAFE*,  
ARA. NO *DANGER* WILL  
COME TO YOU IN HERE,  
I *PROMISE* THAT.

BUT YOU  
NEED TO HELP  
ME. NO MATTER WHAT  
HAPPENS, YOU MUST  
STAY IN THIS  
ROOM.

DO YOU  
UNDERSTAND?



YES. BUT  
WHAT ABOUT  
YOU?



I'M GOING  
TO DO WHAT I  
ALWAYS DO.

*PROTECT*  
YOU.

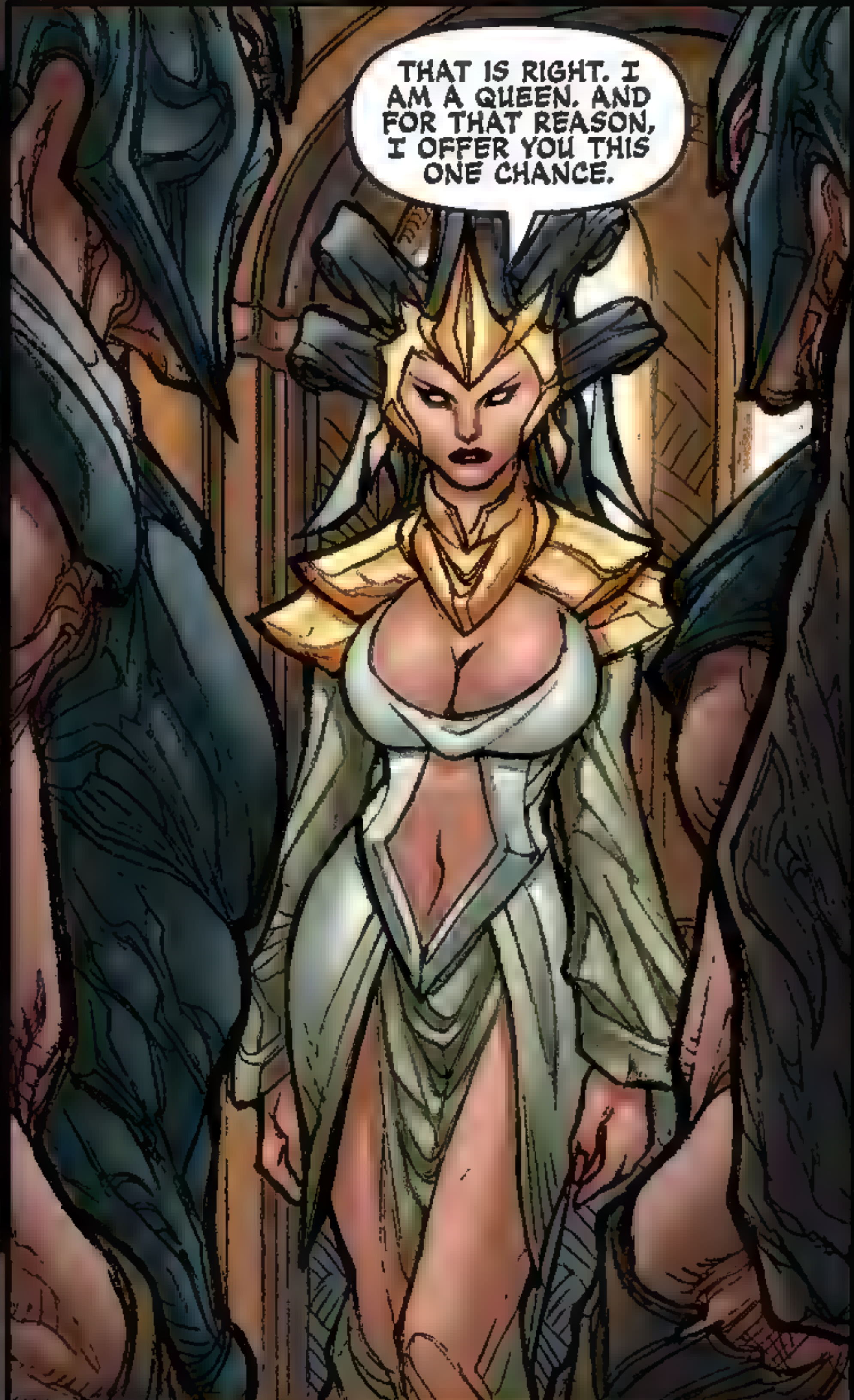




CLICK



THERE! THE QUEEN!



THAT IS RIGHT. I AM A QUEEN. AND FOR THAT REASON, I OFFER YOU THIS ONE CHANCE.



LEAVE NOW. NEVER RETURN.



IT APPEARS YOU HAVE WHOLLY EMBRACED THIS LIFESTYLE HERE, HAVEN'T YOU?

STILL-- ONE CANNOT CHANGE WHO THEY ARE, OR WHERE THEY CAME FROM.

NO...



YOU SHOULD HAVE GUARDED YOUR VESSEL MORE CLOSELY, LUNA.

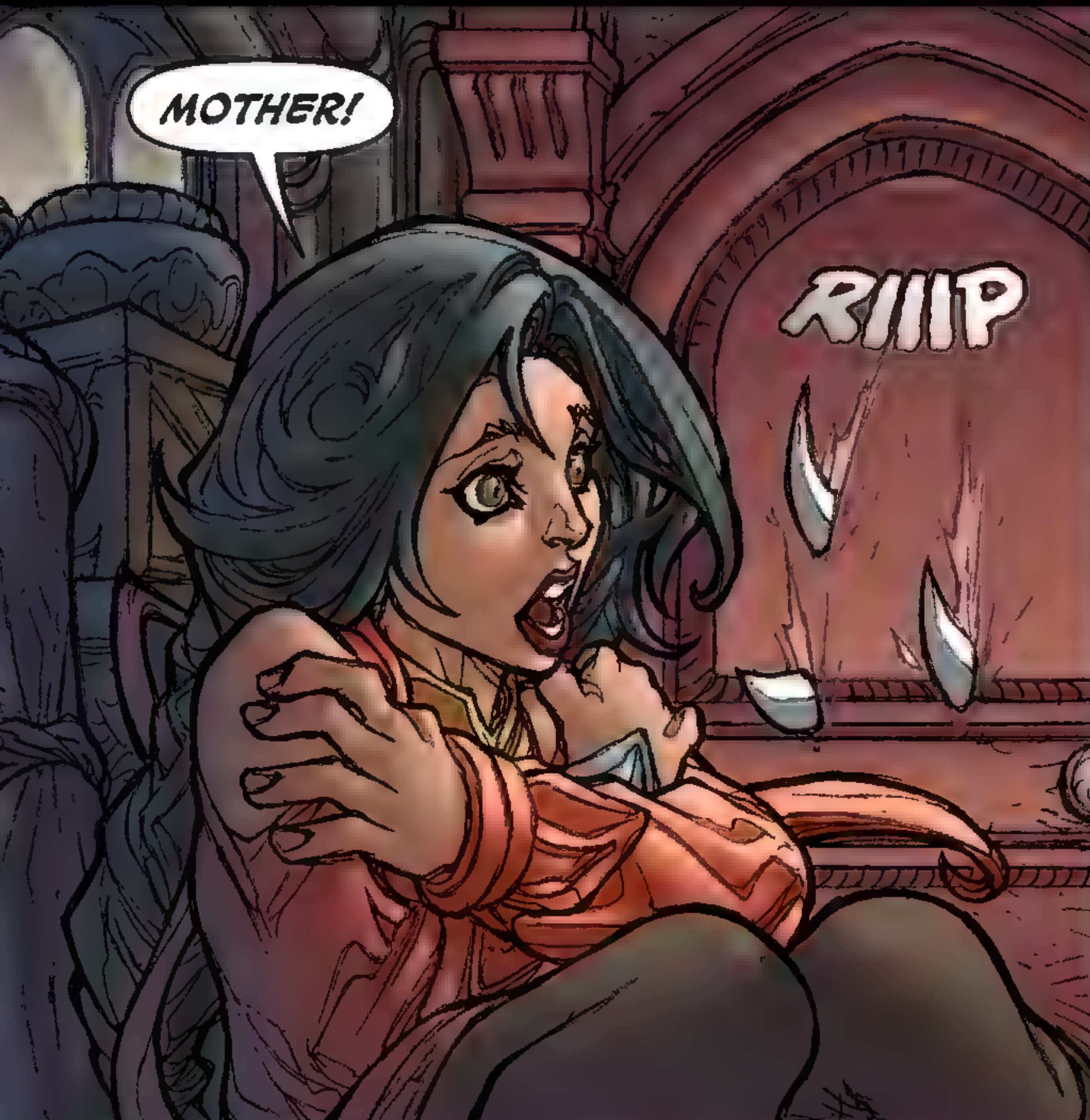
AHHHH!



YOU AND YOUR KING MAY CLAIM THE REST OF JANNA.

I HAVE MY PRIZE.





MOTHER!

RIIP



WHAT HAVE WE HERE? THE PRINCESS?



I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHALL FETCH A HIGHER PRICE. HER TREASURES OR HER FLESH?



That was the first day terror filled my heart.

AHHH! IT BURNS!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ME??

N-NOTHING.



THE SENSATION DID NOT LAST LONG.

BUT THE FEAR DID NOT MELT AWAY...

IT TURNED TO POWER.





IN THAT MOMENT, I DID NOT KNOW WHAT I WAS. I ONLY KNEW THAT MY MOTHER HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM ME.

AND THAT SOMEHOW, I FOUND MYSELF SUDDENLY POSSESSING THE POWER TO FIND HER.

AND SO, I LEFT JANNA, VENTURING OUT BEYOND MY HOME INTO UNCHARTED REALMS, DETERMINED TO FACE EVERY CHALLENGE AND OVERCOME ANY OBSTACLE IN ORDER TO SAVE MY MOTHER.

THAT WAS MY QUEST.

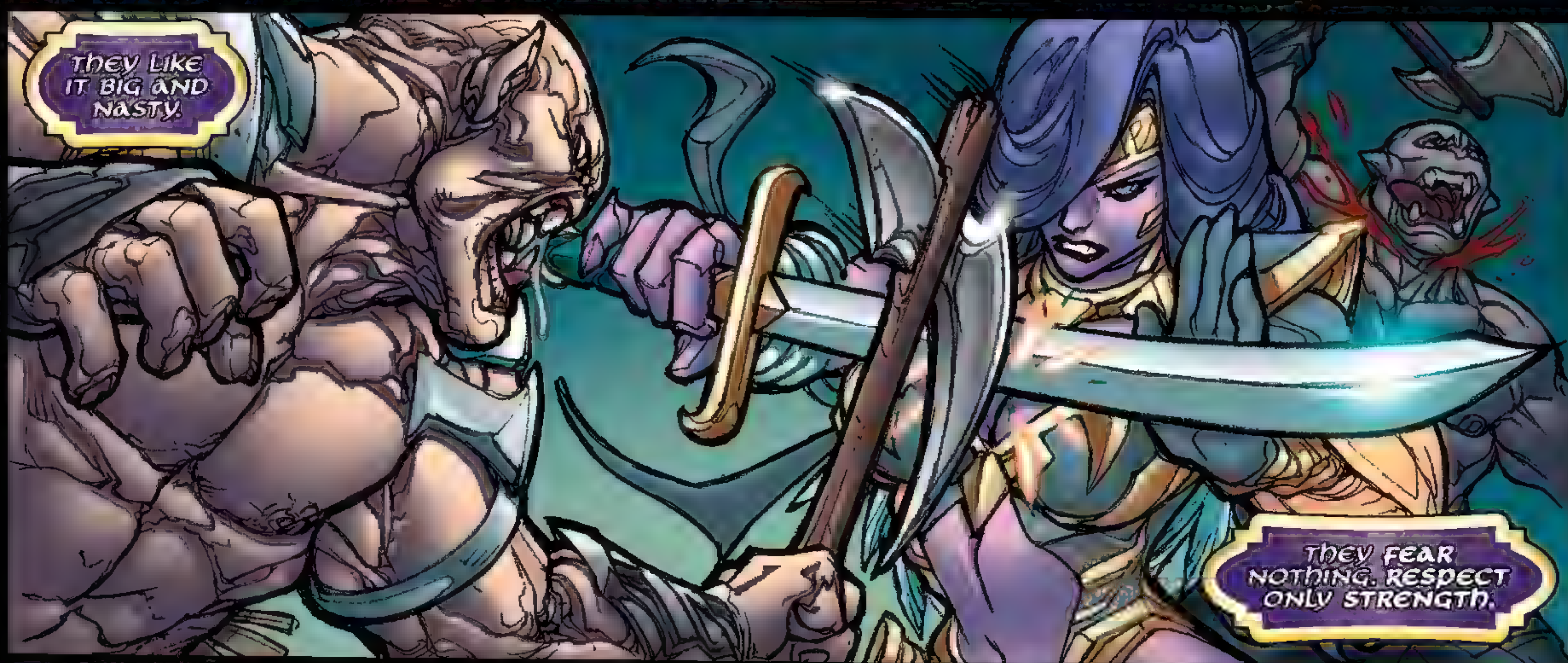




ALONG THE WAY, I  
ENCOUNTERED MANY  
A THREAT.

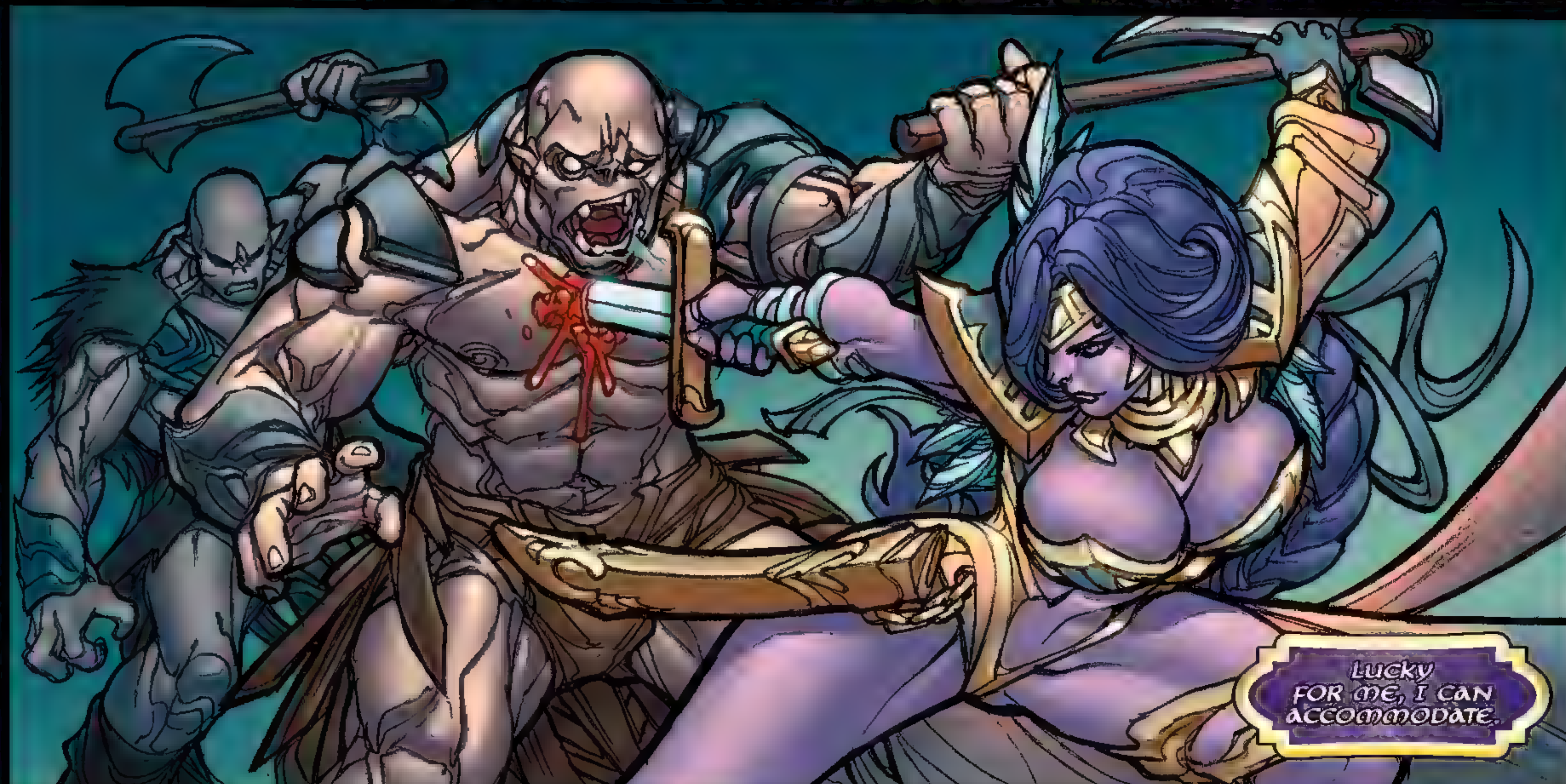
HRUGITES.  
I'VE RUN INTO  
THESE BRUTES  
BEFORE.

DANCED  
THEIR  
DANCE.



THEY LIKE  
IT BIG AND  
NASTY.

THEY FEAR  
NOTHING. RESPECT  
ONLY STRENGTH.



LUCKY  
FOR ME, I CAN  
ACCOMMODATE.



I FACED MY  
GREATEST FEARS.

SOON I  
SHALL TASTE  
YOU.

THIS FOUL  
SMELL HAS A  
FORM.

TELL ME,  
DOES IT HAVE  
A NAME?

OR ARE  
YOU SIMPLY  
TO BE--  
--MONSTER!

GAH!

RAAAWWRRR!









--her.

MOTHER!

ARA?

YOU'RE ALIVE. I KNEW IT. I KNEW YOU COULDN'T BE DEAD.

I FEARED THE SAME ABOUT YOU, MY CHILD.

MOTHER? YOUR SKIN? YOU LOOK JUST LIKE TORINTHAL'S DEMON. WHAT ARE YOU? WHAT AM I?

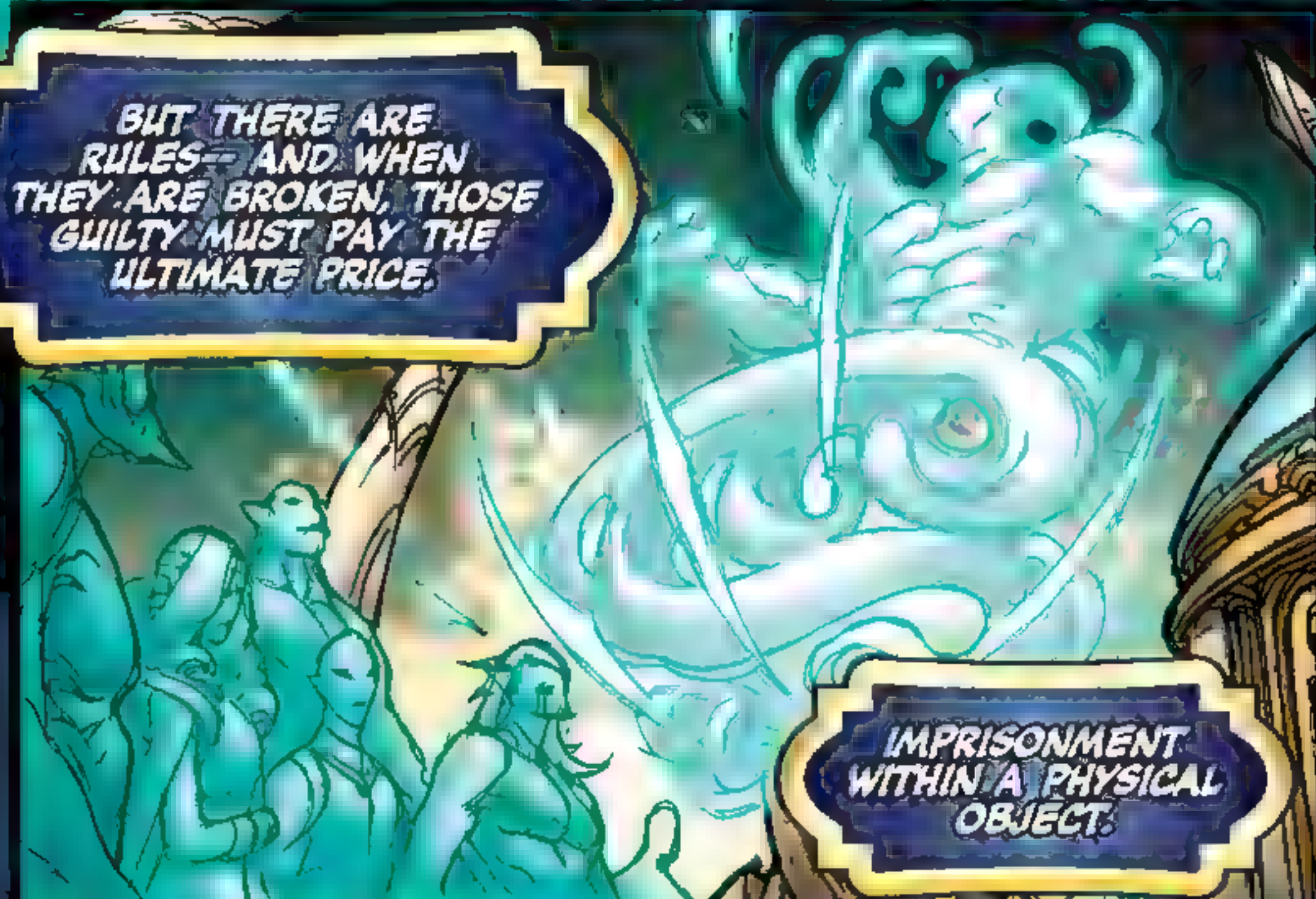
OVER THE AGES, WE HAVE BEEN KNOWN BY DIFFERENT NAMES. MOST HERE CALL US D'JINN. BUT THIS IS NOT OUR WORLD.





I COME FROM ALLAYON. IT IS HARD TO DESCRIBE, FOR IT IS UNLIKE ANYTHING IN THIS REALM.

A PLACE OF WONDER AND PEACE, WHERE OUR SPIRITS SHINE-- ROAMING FREE, UNHINDERED BY THE TRAPPINGS AND CHALLENGES FOUND HERE.



BUT THERE ARE RULES-- AND WHEN THEY ARE BROKEN, THOSE GUILTY MUST PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE.

IMPRISONMENT WITHIN A PHYSICAL OBJECT.



BANISHMENT FROM OUR WORLD.



SERVITUDE TO WHOMEVER MAY POSSESS OUR VESSEL.



WHEN I WAS CAST OUT, IT WAS YOUR GRANDFATHER THAT DISCOVERED ME. I SERVED HIM WITH HONOR, AND WHEN YOUR FATHER WAS BORN, I STOOD BESIDE HIM AS HE GREW INTO THE KING YOU KNOW.



I WAS NO LONGER BOUND BY SERVITUDE. I WAS BOUND BY LOVE.

A LOVE THAT CREATED YOU.

ARA, I AM TRAPPED BY WHOEVER CONTROLS MY VESSEL. BUT YOU-- YOU ARE DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER D'JINN.

YOU ARE FREE.

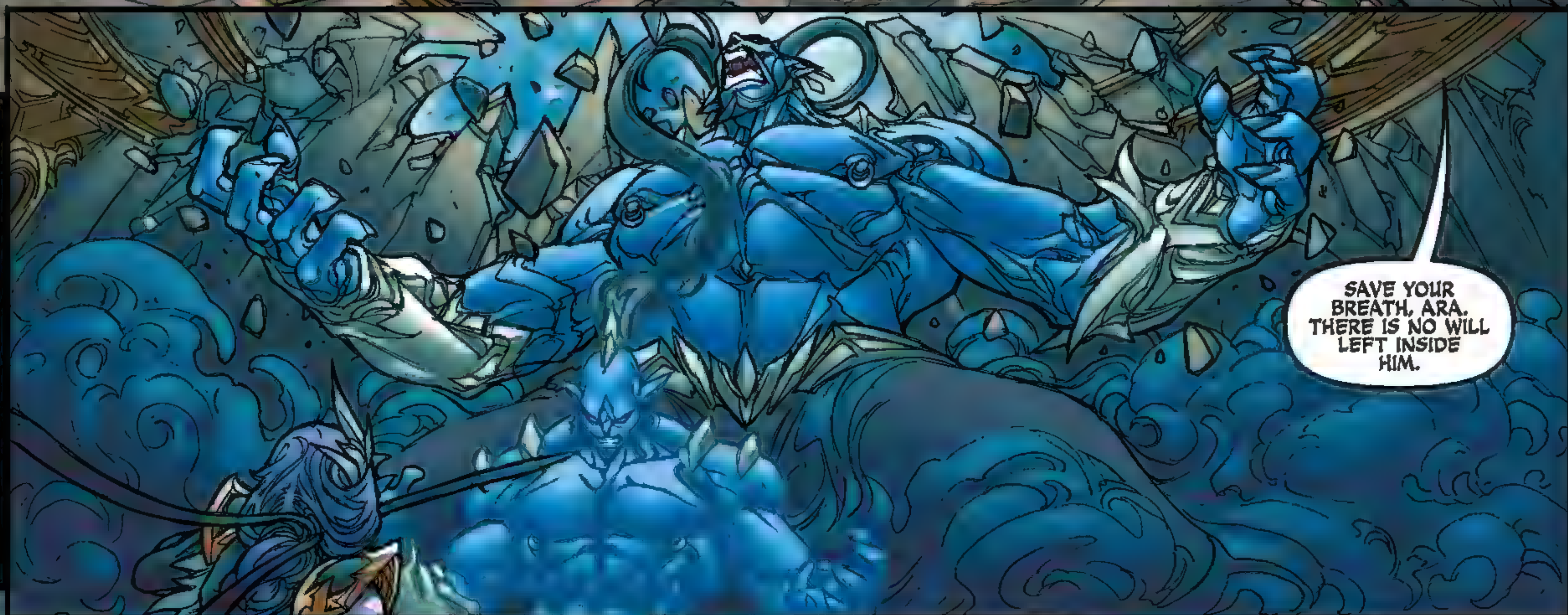


BEFORE I COULD SAVE HER,  
TORINTHAL UNLEASHED  
ANOTHER D'JINN UNDER HIS  
CONTROL AND ORDERED HIM  
TO DESTROY ME.

**RAAWWRRR!**

ANJAH,  
STOP!

WE ARE  
THE SAME, YOU  
AND I.



SAVE YOUR  
BREATH, ARA.  
THERE IS NO WILL  
LEFT INSIDE  
HIM.



THERE  
IS ONLY MY  
DESIRE.



DON'T  
LET ME STOP  
YOU, LUNA.  
GO TO  
HER.

ARA!

I DID NOT HAVE THE POWER TO  
DEFEAT THE GREAT ANJAH, BUT  
I DID SOMETHING EVEN BETTER.  
I FREED HIM. SENT HIM BACK TO  
HIS REALM OF ALLAVON...



AND PURSUED TORINTHAL INTO THE DESERT BEYOND THE KINGDOM WALLS. HE COULD NOT ESCAPE ME. OR SO I THOUGHT...

TORINTHAL!

YOU WOULD BE WISE TO *RELEASE* ME, TORINTHAL.

YOU HAVE *NOWHERE* TO RUN. *NOWHERE* TO HIDE.

YOUR DAUGHTER DOES NOT *FRIGHTEN* ME, LUNA.

AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF *RUNNING*.

BY THE GODS...

CLLKKK  
CH-CH-CH-CH-CHK

WOOOOSSSSHHH





WHAT  
MANNER OF  
SORCERY IS  
THIS?



AND JUST  
LIKE THAT-- SHE IS  
LOST TO ME ONCE  
MORE.

AND MY QUEST IS  
FAR FROM OVER.

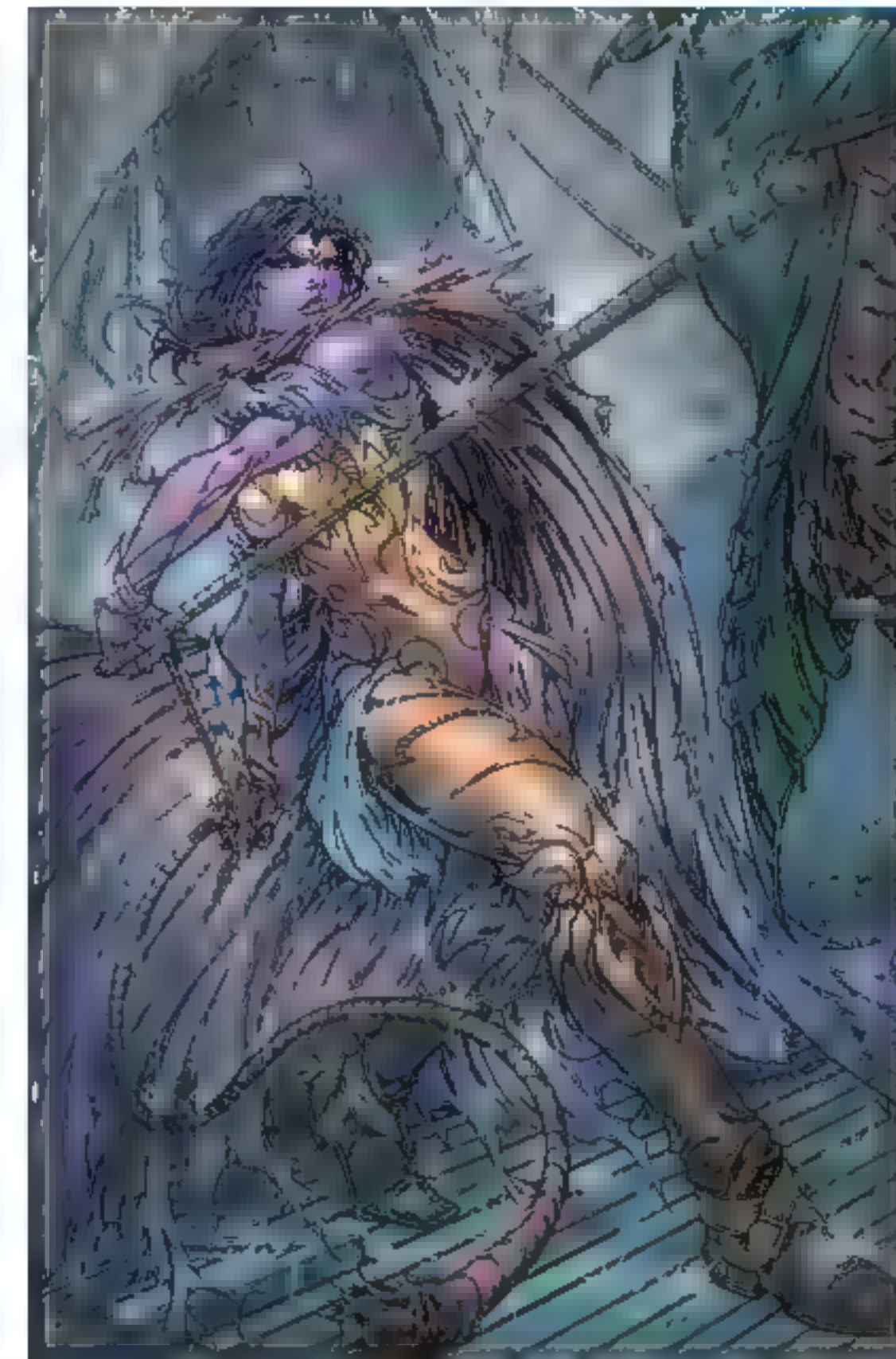
READ MORE IN THE PAGES OF

**Jirni**  
ON SALE NOW!

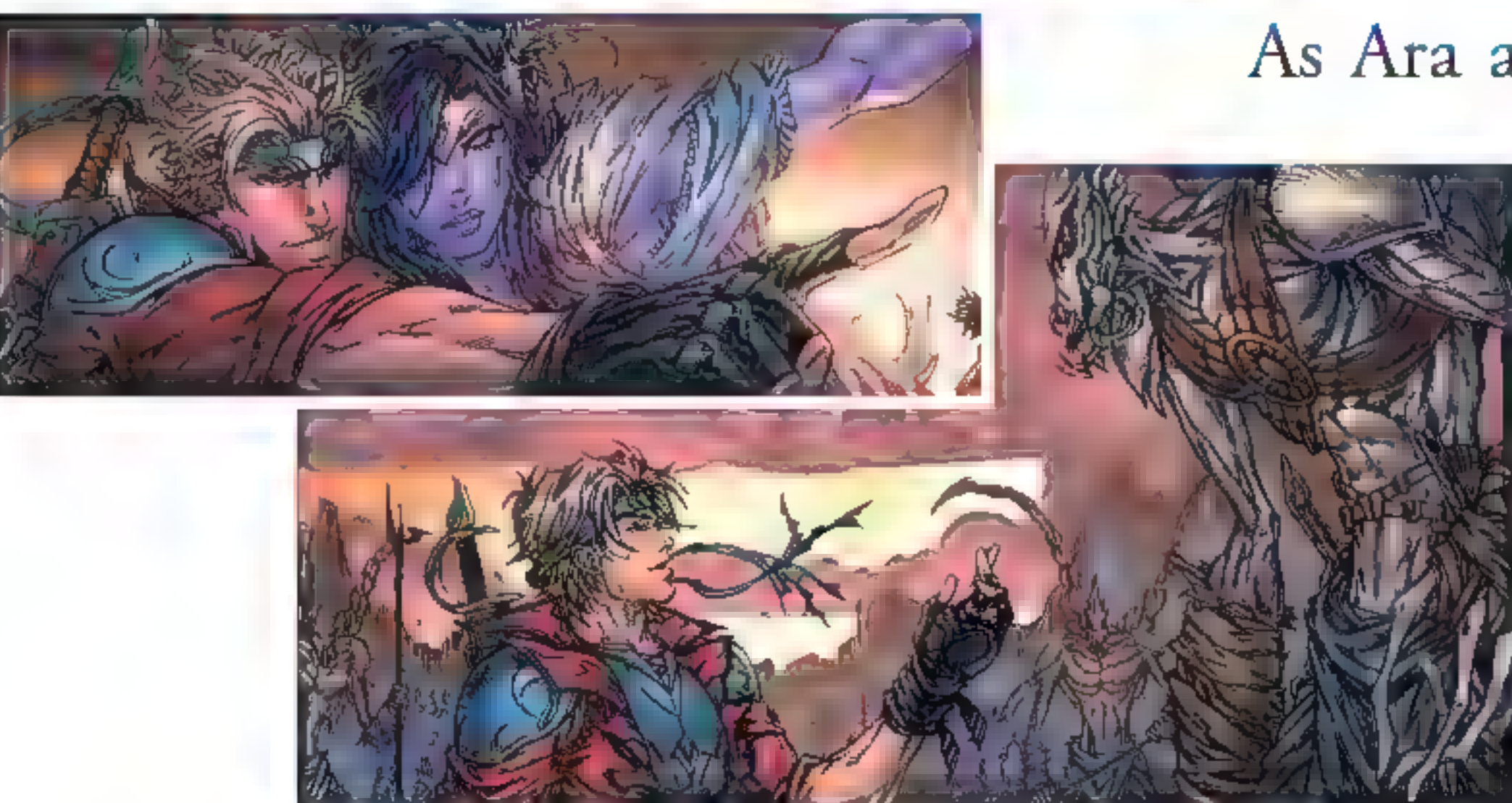


## “New Horizons”

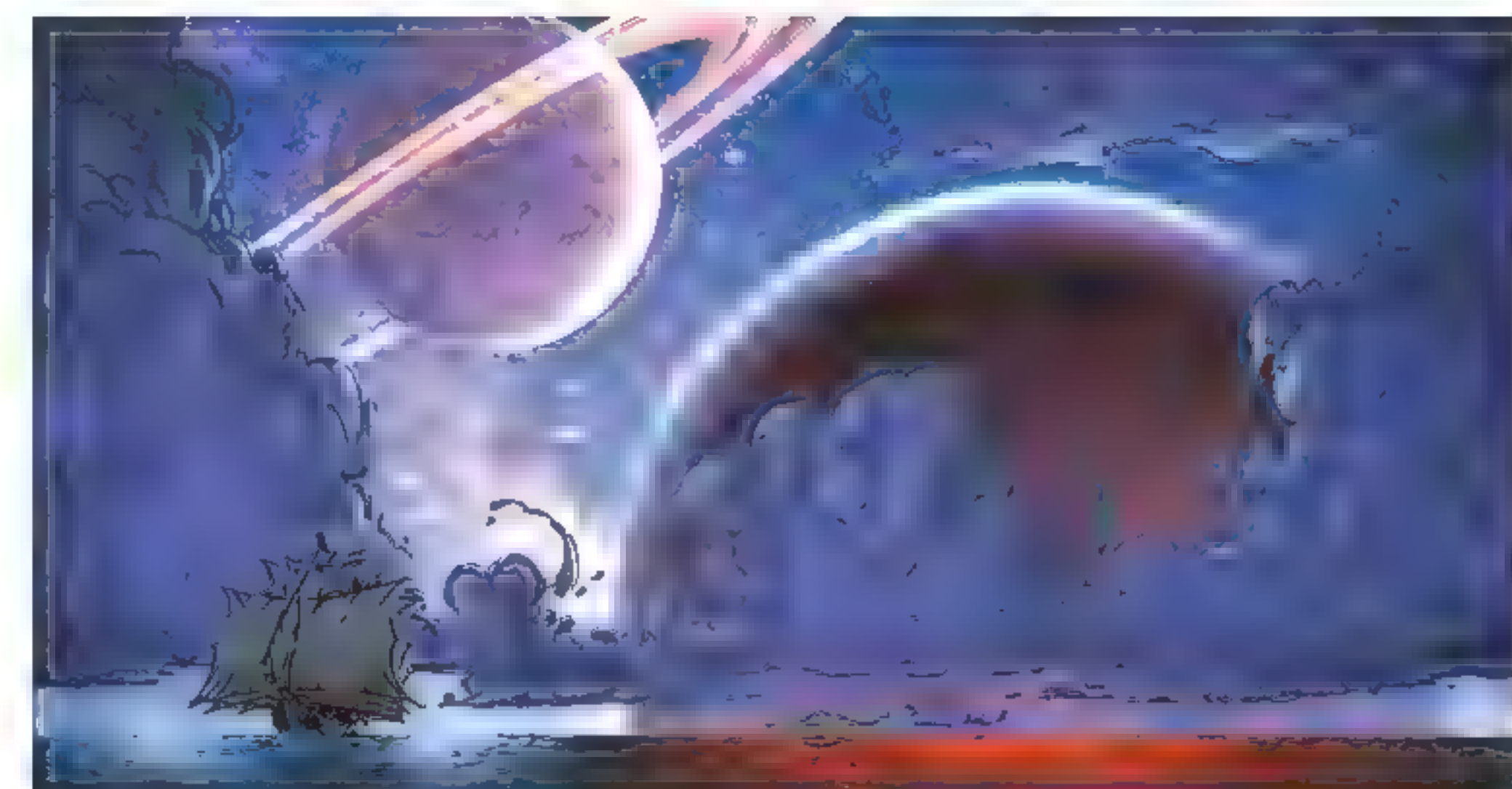
Sailing the high seas with Boro and his crew, Ara learns a bit about the captain and his trade as they approach a remote isle in the middle of the ocean - the Black Rock. Ascending the steep cliffs to the top of the formation, Ara comes face to face with the local lifeforms, insect-like creatures called Tykthas. Boro barter with them, exchanging livestock for ziar, the special ore from the isle's caverns.



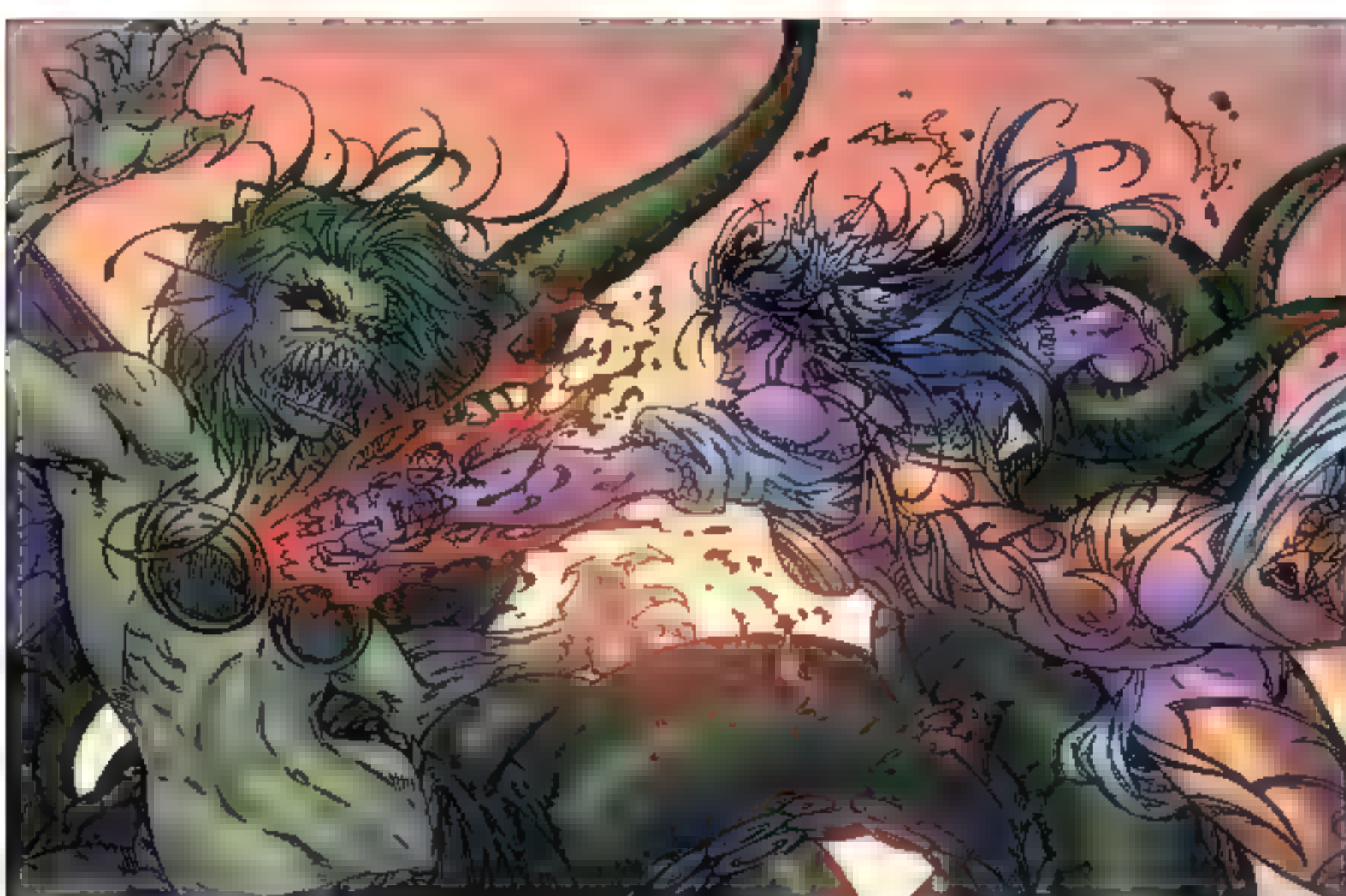
As Ara and members of the crew transport the ore from the cave to the cliffside for lowering to the ship, small Tykthas attack a crewman named Hunta. Ara comes to his defense, clashing with other Tykthas both small and large. Things are about to get out of hand, when Boro calms the matter, instructing Ara to lower her sword. Boro reveals that Hunta was stealing ore for himself, which is a deal breaker in the eyes of the Tykthas.



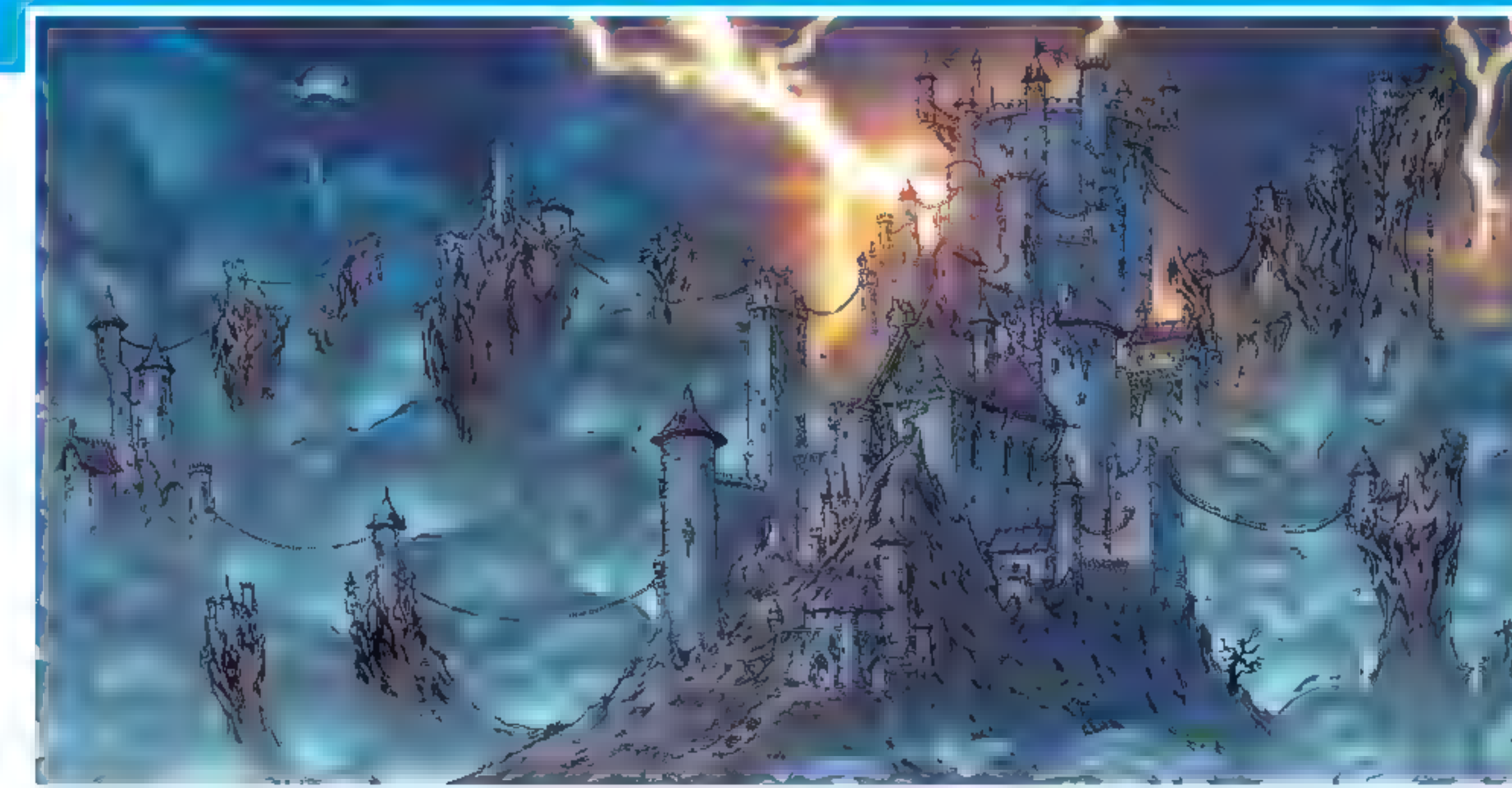
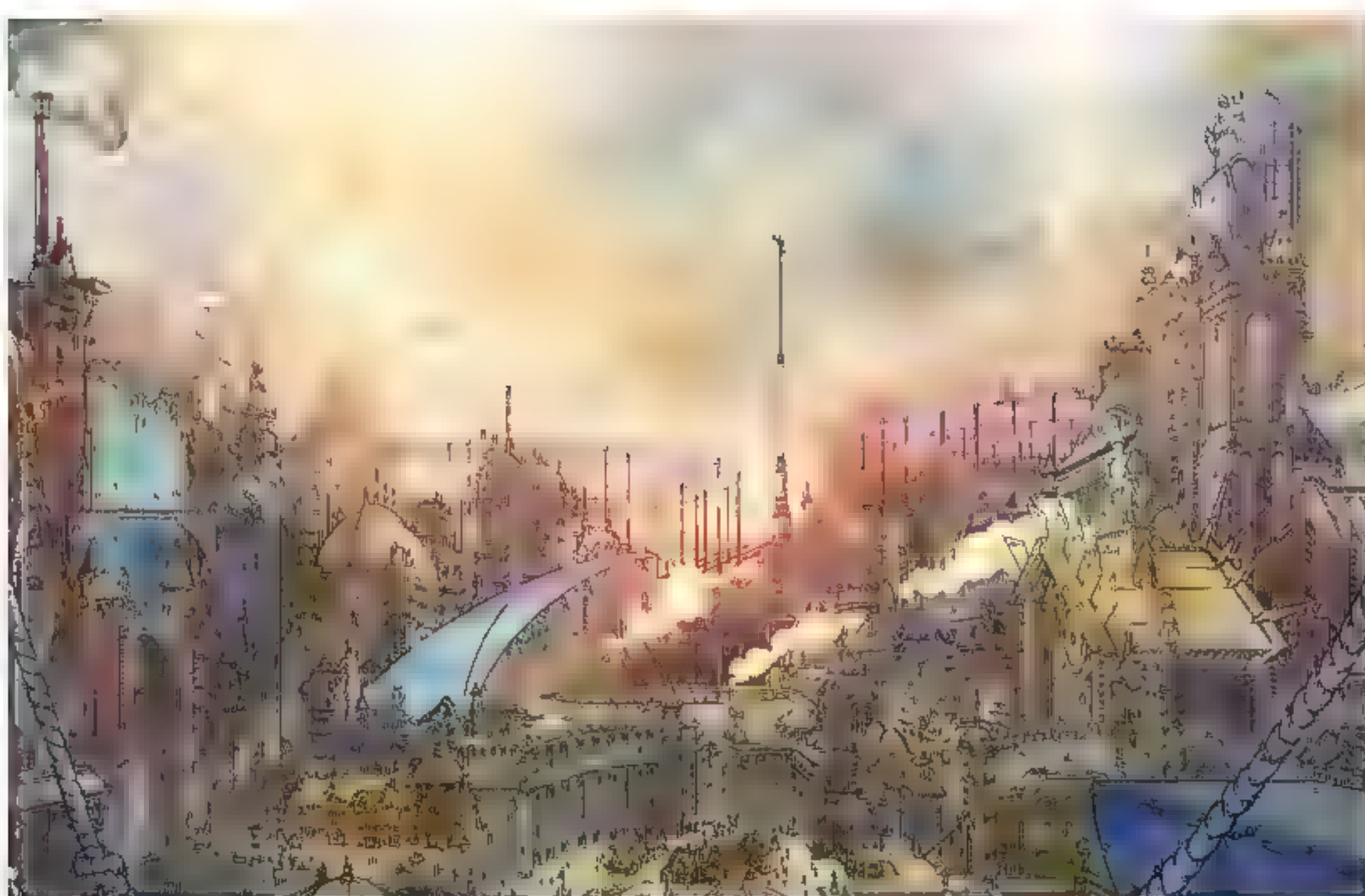
Hunta is turned over to them, and Ara watches him plead for his life as Boro and the rest of the crew return to their ship. Knowing the fate in store for Hunta, Ara shows mercy on him by slitting his throat. She could not free him, but at least she could make his end as quick and painless as possible.



Back out on the ocean, Ara learns more about Boro, who glosses over his tragic early days in telling the story of how he came to be captain of his own ship. Out on the deck, crewmen see visions of beauty in the water. But when they surface, the creatures are not enchanting mermaids, but rather monstrous unda. Together, Ara and Boro work to defeat them.



Continuing on, Boro's ship brings Ara to the grand city of Montessa, where certain technological advances have occurred, partially thanks to the ziar ore that is used as an energy supply. Among the splendor, Ara finds a merchant selling wondrous flying vessels that are similar in design to the one Ara saw Torinthal use to make his escape during their last encounter. She questions the merchant, but doesn't get any answers. Sticking with Boro, Ara follows him to a slave chamber where a harem of blond haired, fair-skinned women are shackled and ready for sale. Boro explains that this is just one of the stages in his triangle trade. The livestock procures the ziar, which is traded for the slaves, which in turn will be traded for more livestock. Ara is appalled and takes her leave of Boro. He makes a last request for something to remember her by, and Ara gives him a lock of her hair - not to be sentimental on her part, but rather because she does not wish to owe him anything.



As Ara plans out her next step in her search for Torinthal and her mother, she cannot stop thinking about the slaves sold to Boro. This triangle trade of his is built upon the misery of others. She decides to hide herself amongst the slaves beneath the ship to see where this all leads. Sailing to another island, Nindalin, Ara watches as the locals of the pastoral village react in

glee at the sight of the next batch of slaves. For them, the women serve as a peace offering to a reclusive sorcerer named R'anu, who keeps trouble from befalling them. Ara and the slaves are delivered to his remote castle lair deep in the mountains. There, she discovers that the mysterious R'anu fashions himself as something of a spiritual man and encourages the women to find salvation within self-purging. Their minds clouded, the slave women

undertake self-mutilation in an effort to experience life beyond the physical. Ara watches in horror as the slave women slice their own flesh from their bodies with daggers.



Having seen enough, Ara sets about to free the women and stop R'anu. She goes to the chamber where the recent slaves are recovering, covered in bandaging, but they are not happy to see her. Completely brainwashed, they do not wish to be rescued. In their minds, they are already saved. They scream and attack, and R'anu and his mummified guards respond to the melee.

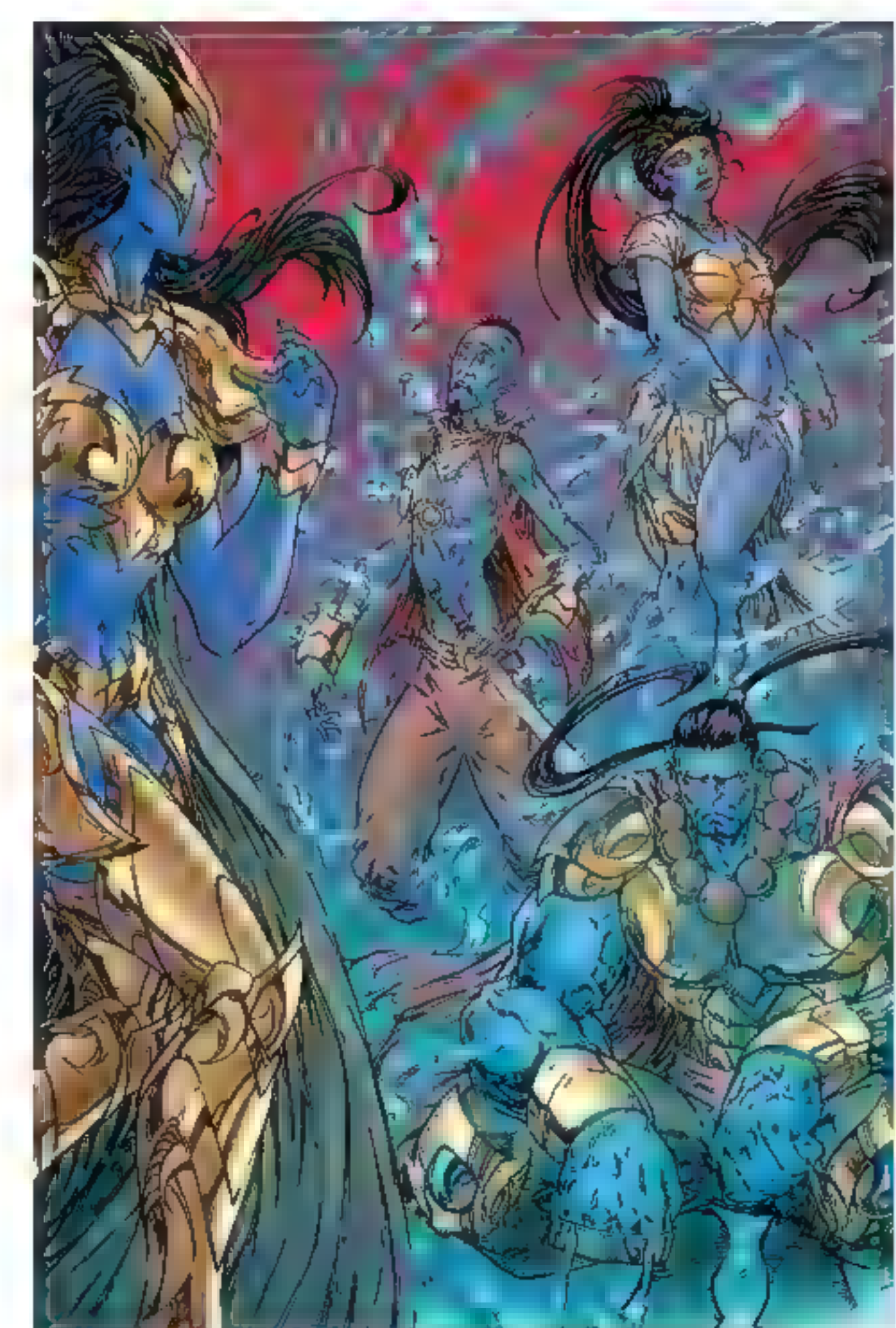
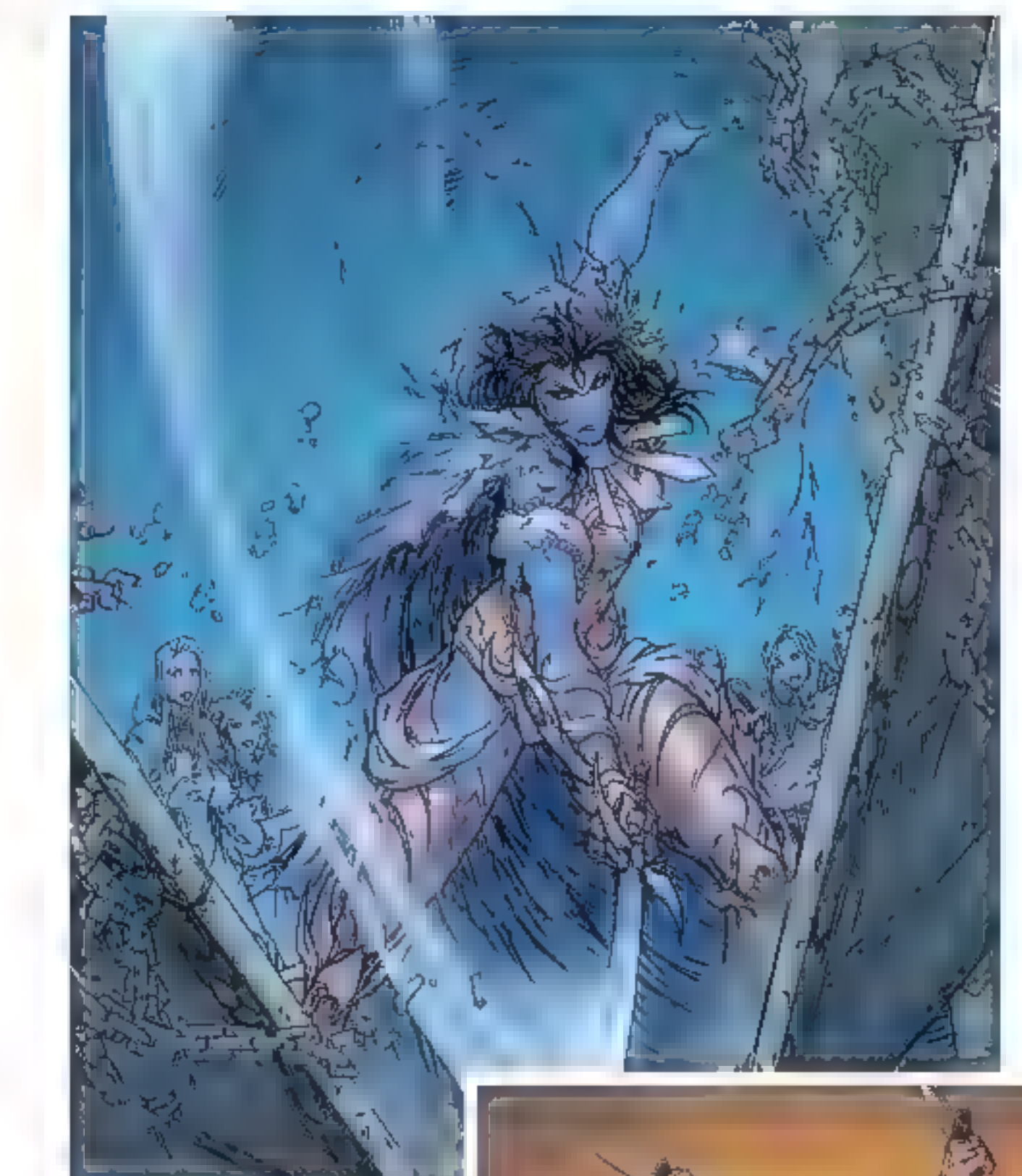
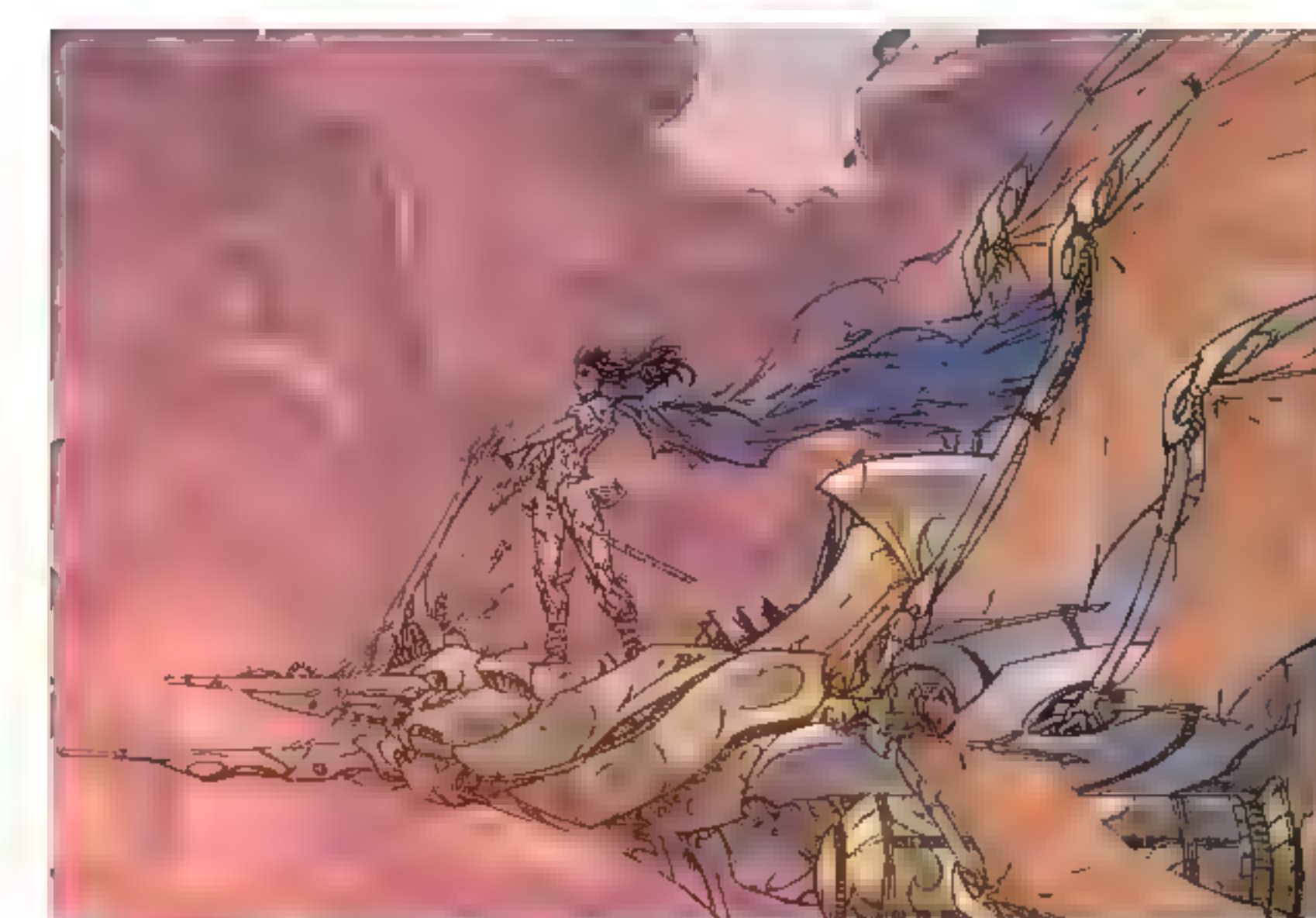
Disgusted by R'anu's impact on the women, Ara fights her way through the guards, learning that they are in fact deformed and mutilated women as well. Ara lashes out at R'anu, giving him a taste of his own medicine, slicing him repeatedly and eventually severing his head.



Ara tries to free the mutilated slaves, but they lash out at her. Even with R'anu dead, they still

follow his twisted philosophy. At a loss, Ara takes the few freethinking women and returns to the city of Nindalin. There, Ara disguises herself as one of R'anu's guards and instructs the townspeople to follow the women's orders or feel R'anu's wrath. They are emissaries for R'anu. Their word is his word. Ara returns to Montessa and to the air vessel merchant,

but this time she is not looking for information. She is looking for transportation. Using one of the vessels, Ara ventures out into the distant sky, heading toward even more uncharted horizons as the journey to find her mother continues.



Read the entire story in Jirni Volume 2  
“New Horizons” TPB available in stores now!



# Jirni

◆ **By J.T. Krul**

## A NEW WORLD OF FANTASY

Essentially, Jirni is my love letter to all things fantasy — Lord of the Rings, Conan, Flash Gordon, Dungeons and Dragons, the Dark Tower series, and basically anything Frank Frazetta ever created. It's a rousing adventure tale, chronicling an epic quest that is about self-discovery as much as it's about anything.

The title of the book is obviously a play on the word journey. But, it's more than that. It's a philosophy of sorts - calling for us to accept life as it comes, both the good and the bad, because everything that happens is part of a larger narrative that shapes and molds us into who we are. I know that I have learned far more from my failures and mistakes than I have from my successes. As they say, in many ways the journey is the destination.

For this story in particular, I have keyed into Arabian mythology and the fable of the genie of the lamp. It's a little different than what you might expect. It's not exactly Aladdin, but you'll see things that call to mind the classic story. But, the world of Jirni is grand and immense and the genie (or d'jinn) aspect is just one part of it.

As much as my love of fantasy inspired the book, there was another force beyond the scenes that played almost as big an influence. Michael Turner. As Frank and Peter and the guys started talking about the big plans for Aspen's 10th anniversary, I knew I wanted to be involved, but a big part of the discussion was about making sure that all the books encapsulated Mike's spirit. As I continued to develop the story, I thought a lot about Mike and what he would have liked — what would have gotten him excited about the book. He was an incredible artist in every respect and shined most designing new and unbelievably awesome characters, ships, creatures, environments...you name it. So, I knew Jirni had to bring all that to the forefront. Dynamic characters we could really sink our teeth into, a world as rich and beautiful as it was deadly, and creatures ripped from our imaginations designed to instill a sense of wonder or adventure or horror. Jirni has everything. For this latest stage of Ara's adventure, I'm thrilled to be teaming up with Michael Sta. Maria and John Starr.



◆ From the sketchbook of Jirni Volume 3 artist,  
◆ **Michael Sta. Maria**



**Lazo**

Brown skin brute man  
bela with more  
accessories than the  
other renegades



**Handish**



**Merchant**



**Caspar**

Spacers on  
both ears  
Gold and  
black



Gold and  
black

Gold and  
black

**Majeed**



**Mitra**

Translucent





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# D'JINN™

THE EPIC THIRD  
VOLUME BEGINS!

#1



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World of High Adventure!

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whereabouts of her captive mother—and the  
secrets to her own incredible D'Jinn abilities!

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Everything you need  
to know about...

# MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM

W  
E  
B  
C  
O  
M  
I  
C  
S



MICHAEL  
TURNER  
JON  
SIBAL  
Peters





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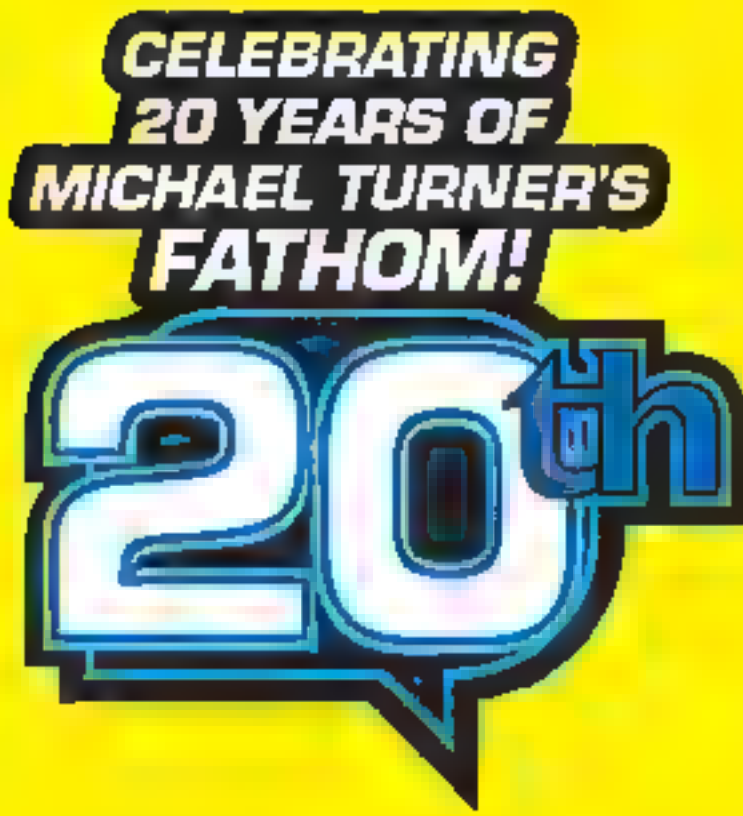
# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

## 20 Years Ago In The World Above...

Superstar artist Michael Turner created Fathom, the epic story of a marine biologist, Aspen Matthews, born of The Blue beneath the surface of the ocean yet raised as a human in the city of San Diego, and her quest to discover her true identity. The debut would go on to become the #1 best selling comic book of the year...

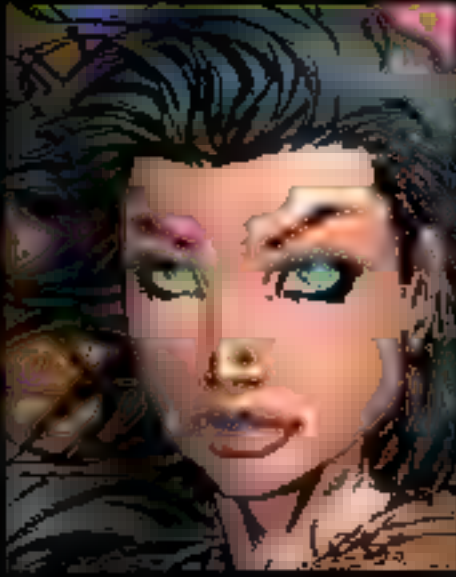
## Today in the World Below...

The advancement of The Blue has expanded beneath—and above—the water into every fabric of human society. Aspen, with her immense power of The Elite Blue and complete knowledge of her true family, now finds herself alone as the central figure holding both civilizations' fates together...



## FATHOM THE MAJOR PLAYERS:

### Aspen Matthews



Aspen was born beneath the surface as a member of The Blue, but soon discovered her Elite Blue heritage, a more powerful class of the underwater species. However, she was raised above the surface following her adoption by Captain Matthews during the Paradise cruise ship resurfacing. Later, she was a part of the DMD explosion and subsequently found herself under the tutelage of the dissident Killian during his quest to lead a rebellion of The Blue.

She has since become part of the ongoing conflict between The Blue and the Human race, oftentimes taking it upon herself to force either side to co-exist peacefully.

### Captain Matthews



The Captain of the Paradise cruise ship that suddenly reappeared after being lost at sea for ten years, Captain Matthews found and adopted Aspen Matthews, and raised her in San Diego. He would become part of Admiral Maylander's plot to bait and trap Aspen and Chance. However, Aspen foiled that plan by making a startling discovery that she could utilize the moisture in the air around her to save them. Captain Matthews remains a father figure to Aspen to this day.

### Chance Calloway



United States Naval Pilot Chance Calloway is Aspen Matthews' boyfriend and ally in her ongoing quest to end the conflict between the Humans and The Blue. Calloway has his own fair share of exploits, including his accidental destruction of The DMD facility under the surface. Calloway has also spent numerous occasions under the surface alongside The Blue in combat both with—and against them.

### Tyler Kincaid



Investigative reporter Tyler Kincaid remains one of Aspen's most trusted friends and roommate. Alongside their pet bulldog, Matilda, Tyler has helped Aspen keep some semblance of a normal human life, yet has also helped her on many occasions both above and below the surface, including saving her life.

### Cannon Hawke



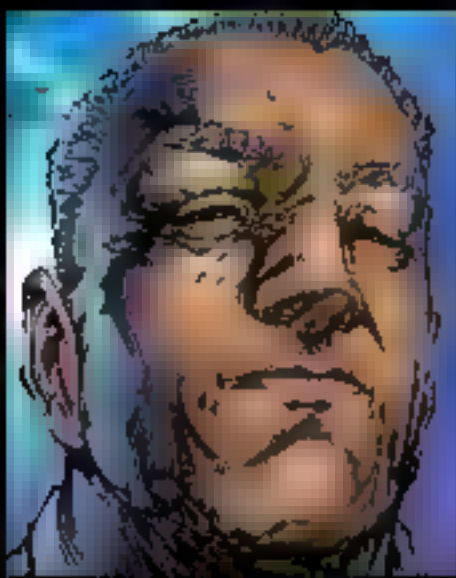
Cannon Hawke is often seen as Aspen's mentor and guardian since her youth as a member of The Blue. He has rescued her from the clutches of Killian and also served as Elite Commander of The Blue. He was murdered by the dissident Kiani during the battle between the Humans and The Blue.

### Killian



The dissident Killian has proven he will stop at nothing to gain control of The Blue and rise up against the Human world. Since his early childhood, Killian proved his mettle by murdering his own brother, in service of his greater calling of rebellion. He nearly completed his mission by kidnapping and teaching Aspen Matthews how to harness her immense power for his cause. However, Aspen was able to finally use her powers to eviscerate Killian in the Blue Sun. Later, he would return to form and has continued to play a vital role in the changing tides of The Blue's world.

### Admiral Maylander



The highest-ranking member of the United States Navy and also a powerful enemy of The Blue, Admiral Maylander has been double-crossed by the dissident Killian and seen his armies defeated in combat many times by The Blue. However, his stalwart dedication to his country precludes his mission to continue fighting The Blue at all costs.

### Finn



Aspen Matthews' birth brother under the surface. The pair share a bond of blood and loyalty stemming from Finn's guardianship over Aspen beginning from her appearance on the rediscovered Paradise cruise ship. Finn rescued Aspen from an initial attempt to take her by Killian's dissidents, but was unsuccessful in stopping them from eventually gaining control of her and her abilities. Finn continues to look after his sister by blood when he can.

*Michael Turner's Fathom created by Michael Turner*

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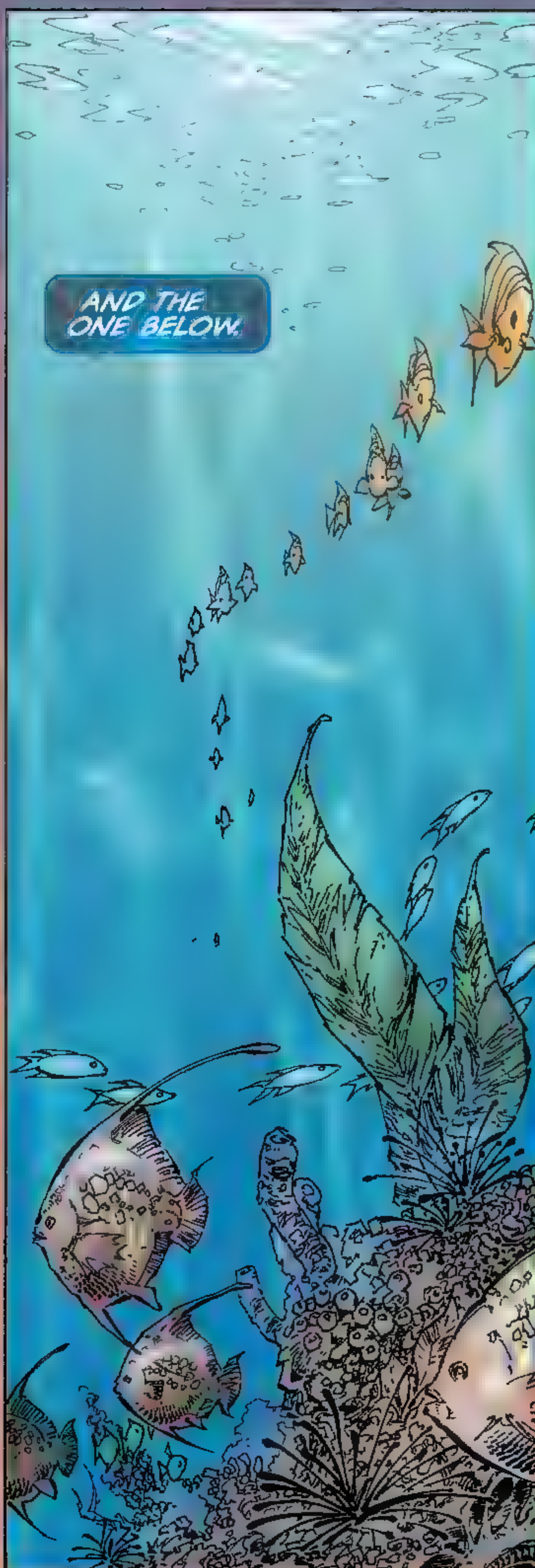
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TWO WORLDS  
EXIST ON THIS  
PLANET



THE ONE  
WE KNOW



AND THE  
ONE BELOW

THE ONE  
WE KNOW IS  
FAMILIAR AND  
COMFORTABLE

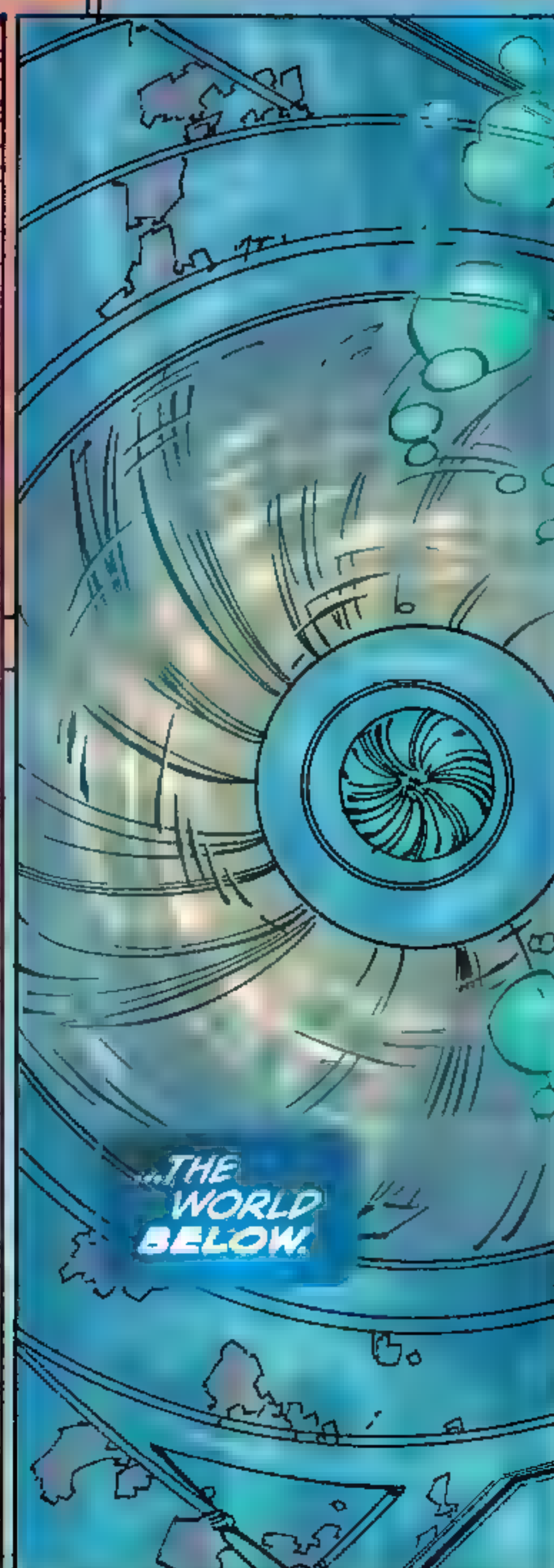
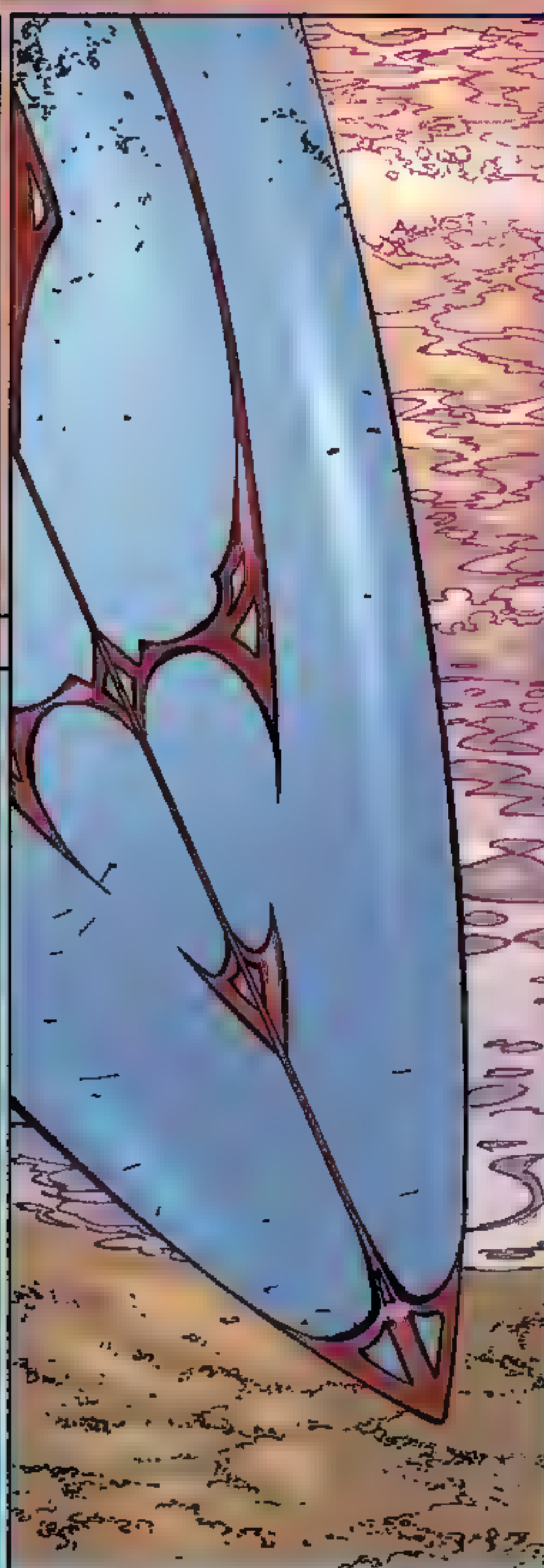
BELOW THAT  
PLACE LIES THE  
UNFAMILIAR AND  
**DEFINITELY**  
UNCOMFORTABLE  
DEPTHS THAT HIDE  
UNSPEAKABLE  
DANGERS

MOST PEOPLE LIVE WITH  
A MYOPIC VIEW OF THEIR  
EXISTENCE. THEY'RE CONTENT  
WITH THEIR HOUSE, CAR, 2.5  
KIDS, DOG, TV DINNERS, AND  
OCCASIONALLY GETTING OUT  
TO SEE A MOVIE. THE RULES  
WERE LAID OUT CENTURIES  
AGO, AND THERE IS NO NEED  
FOR THEM TO EXPLORE WHAT  
LIES BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES  
OF THIS COMFORTABLE  
PLACE

I, ON THE OTHER HAND,  
AM FASCINATED BY WHAT  
LIES BEYOND "NORMAL"  
BOUNDARIES—WHAT'S  
BENEATH THE SURFACE

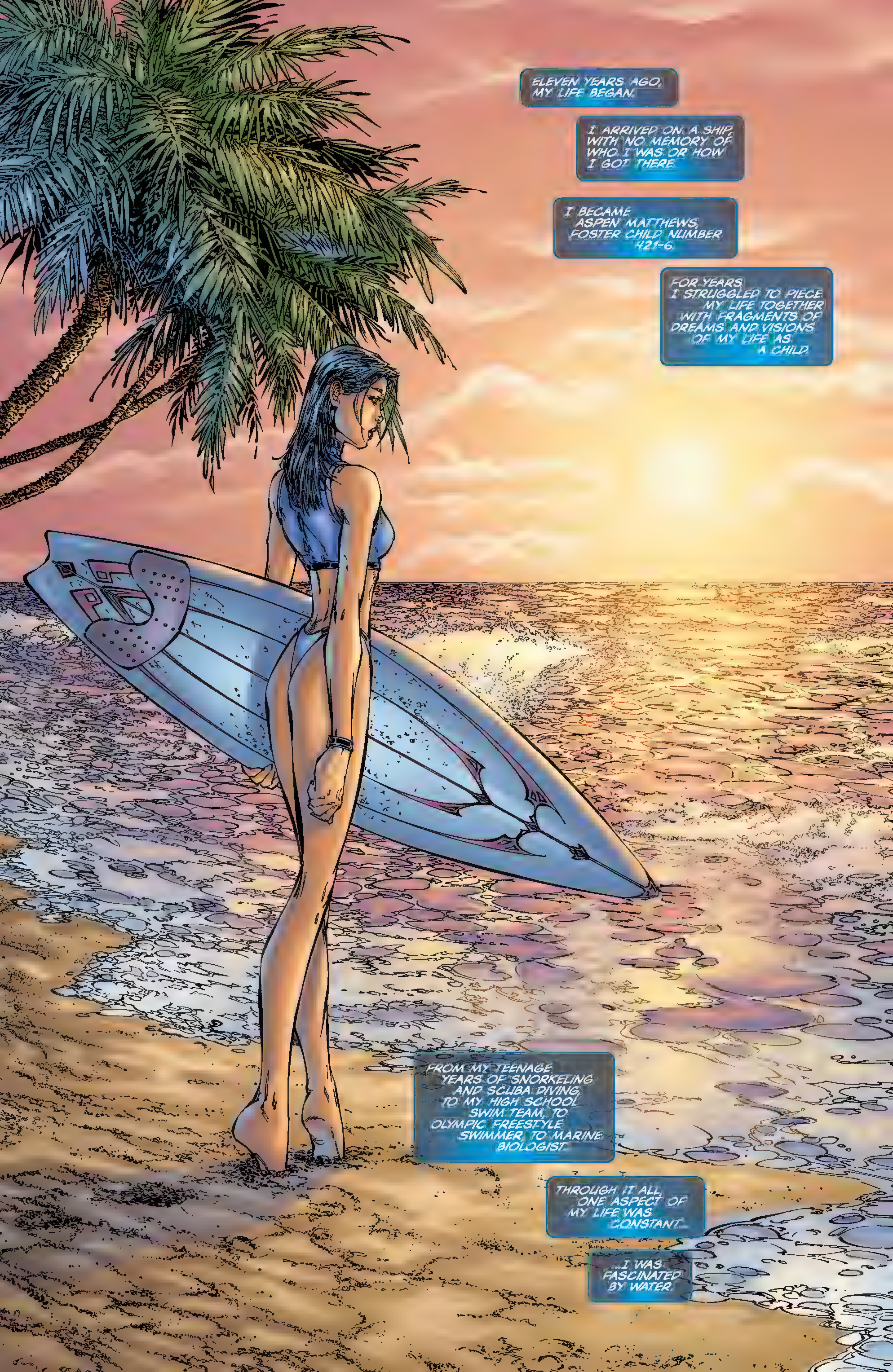


...THE  
MYSTERIOUS  
DEPTHS...



THE  
WORLD  
BELOW





ELEVEN YEARS AGO,  
MY LIFE BEGAN.

I ARRIVED ON A SHIP  
WITH NO MEMORY OF  
WHO I WAS OR HOW  
I GOT THERE.

I BECAME  
ASPEN MATTHEWS,  
FOSTER CHILD NUMBER  
421-6.

FOR YEARS  
I STRUGGLED TO PIECE  
MY LIFE TOGETHER  
WITH FRAGMENTS OF  
DREAMS AND VISIONS  
OF MY LIFE AS  
A CHILD.

FROM MY TEENAGE  
YEARS OF SNORKELING  
AND SCUBA DIVING,  
TO MY HIGH SCHOOL  
SWIM TEAM, TO  
OLYMPIC FREESTYLE  
SWIMMER, TO MARINE  
BIOLOGIST.

THROUGH IT ALL,  
ONE ASPECT OF  
MY LIFE WAS  
CONSTANT.

I WAS  
FASCINATED  
BY WATER.





THREE MONTHS AGO,  
IN THE MIDDLE OF SEVERAL  
EXPERIMENTS ON DEEP WATER  
MARINE LIFE PROPULSION  
ANATOMY, I WAS CONTACTED BY  
A DEEP MARINE DISCOVERY (DMD)  
FACILITY THAT WAS CONDUCTING  
SIMILAR EXPERIMENTS IN A TRENCH  
FIFTY MILES NORTH OF THE  
HAWAIIAN RIDGE.

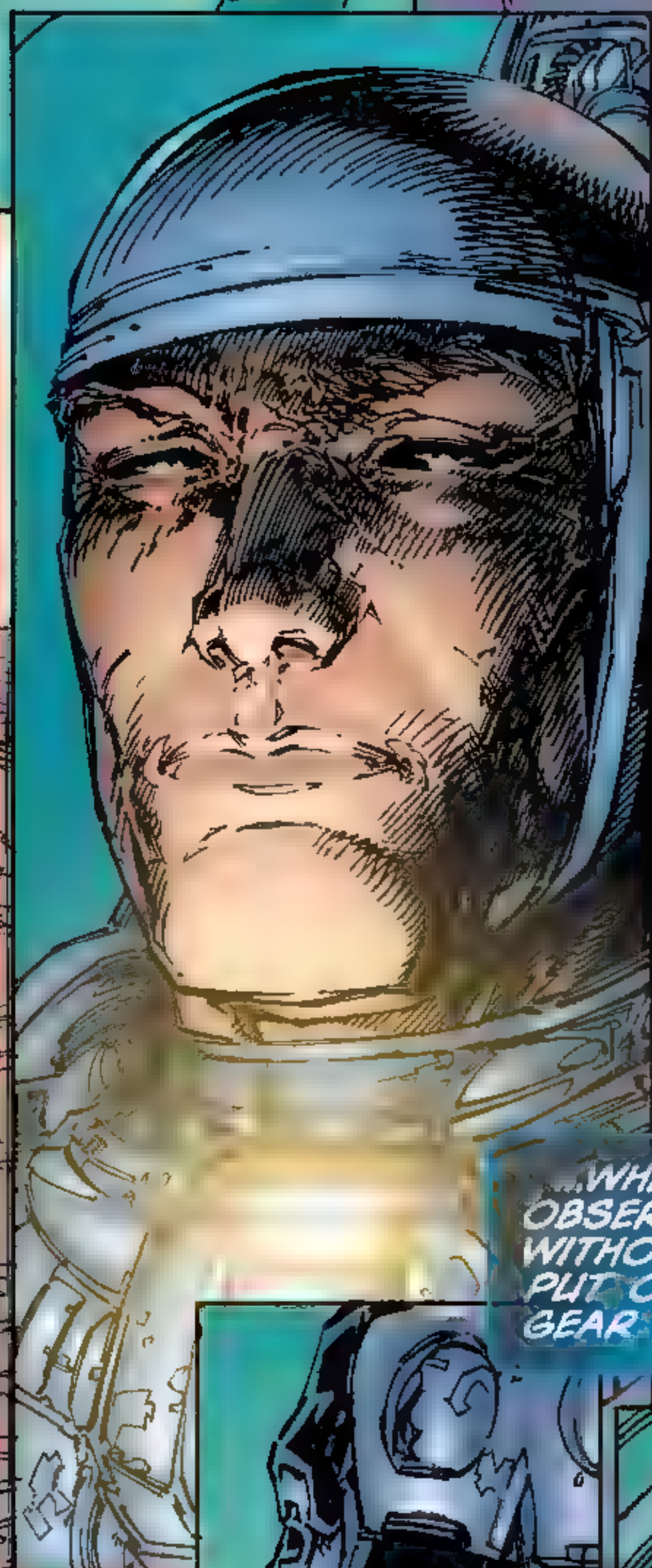
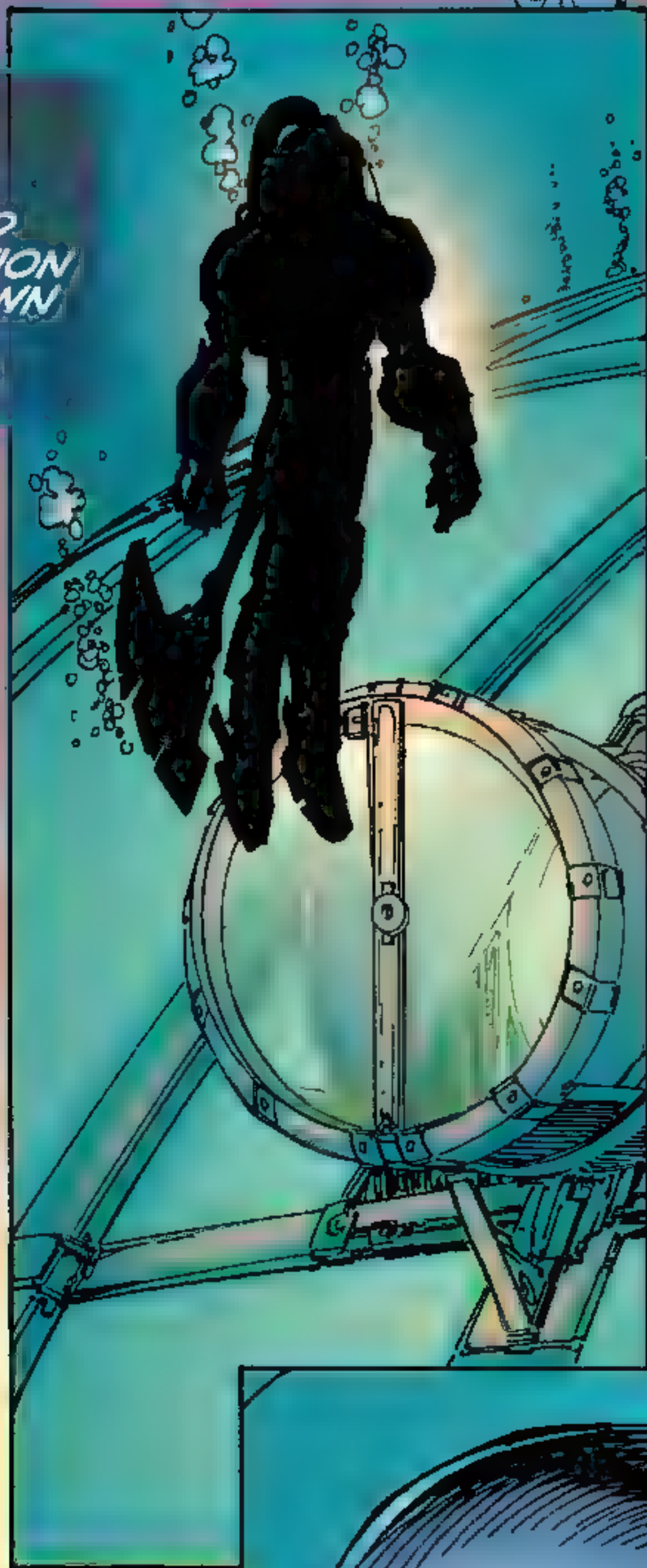
THEY HAD BEEN  
BUILDING A HABITAT  
1200 FEET DOWN  
THAT COULD SUPPORT  
SCIENTISTS FOR  
MONTHS.

I'M NOT SURE  
WHY THEY CONTACTED  
ME, BUT I WAS HAPPY  
TO LET THEM SEE  
MY RESULTS.

I HAVEN'T  
SPOKEN TO  
THEM SINCE.

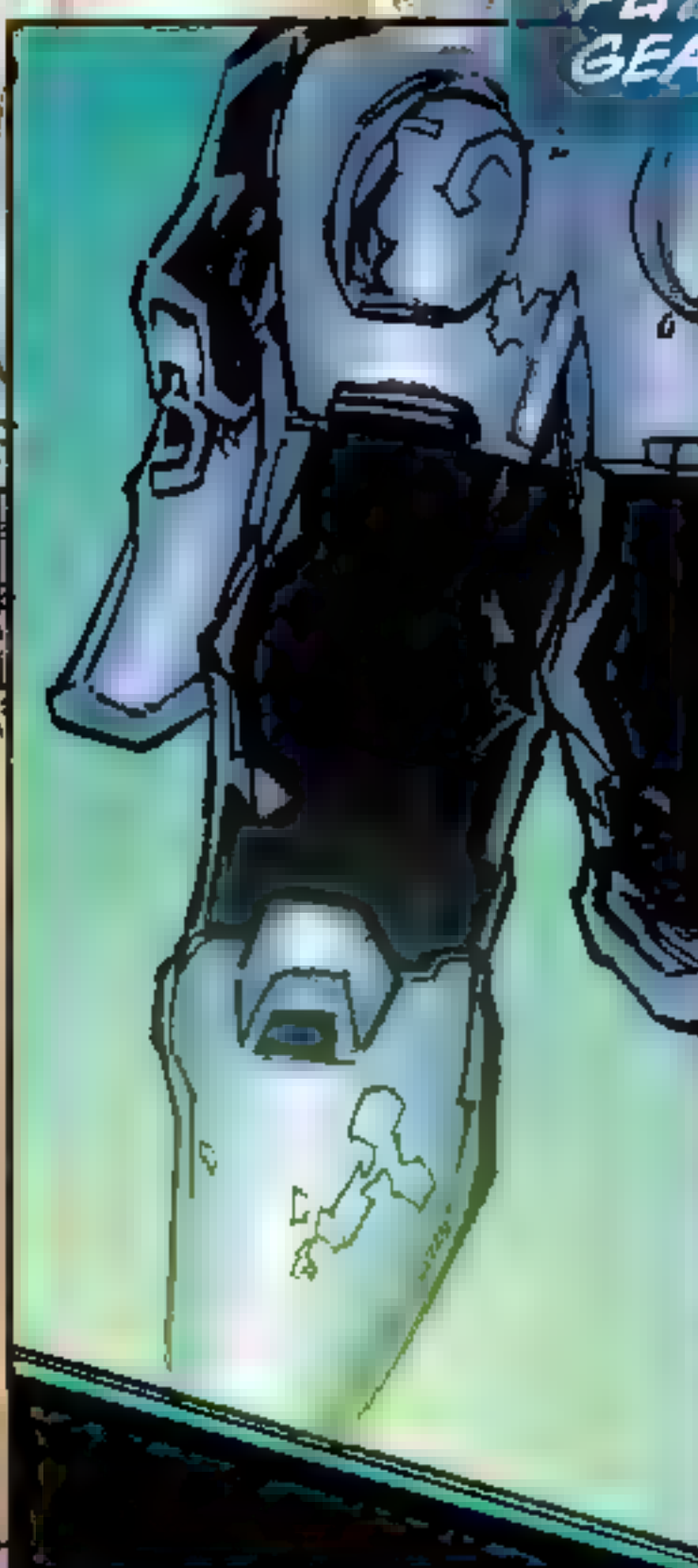


I HAVE NEVER BEEN  
DOWN 1200 FEET BEFORE  
THE FURTHEST DOWN I'VE  
ACTUALLY BEEN IS 300, AND  
THAT WAS ON AN OBSERVATION  
SUBMARINE THAT WENT DOWN  
AROUND THE COAST OF  
SAN DIEGO.

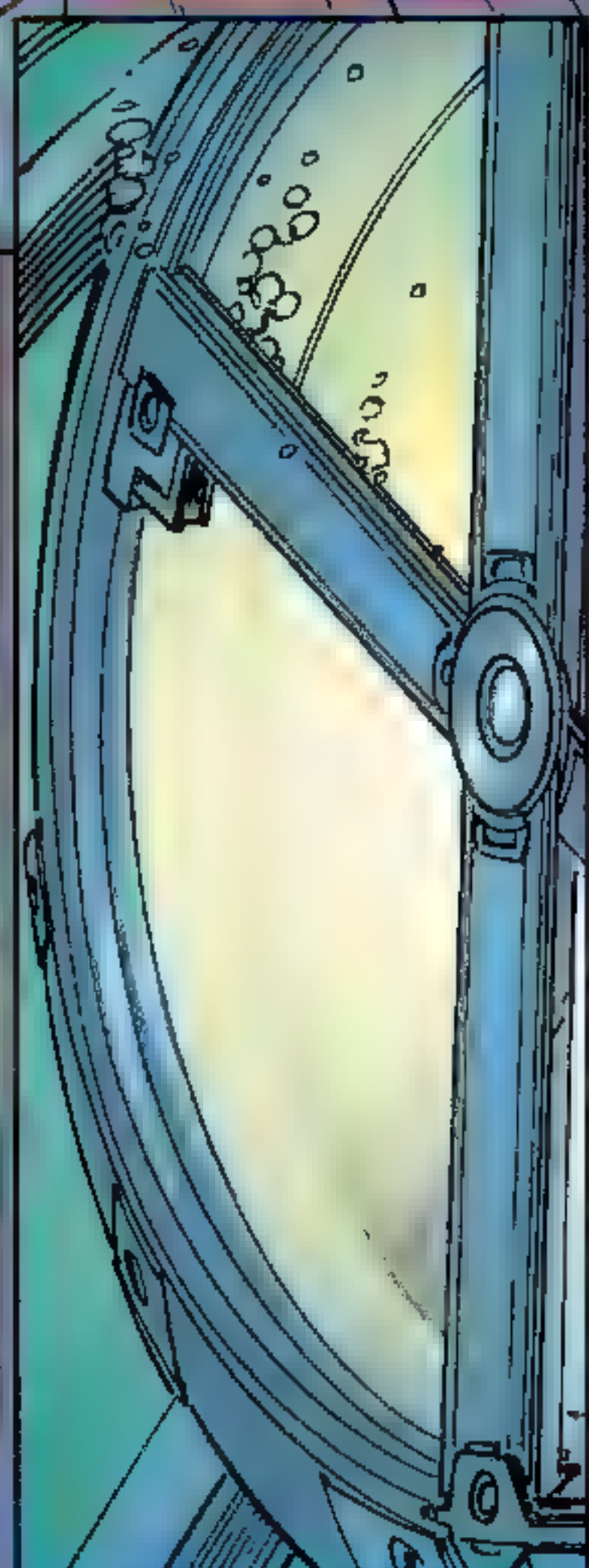


BUT  
TO BE IN  
AN ACTUAL  
HABITAT.

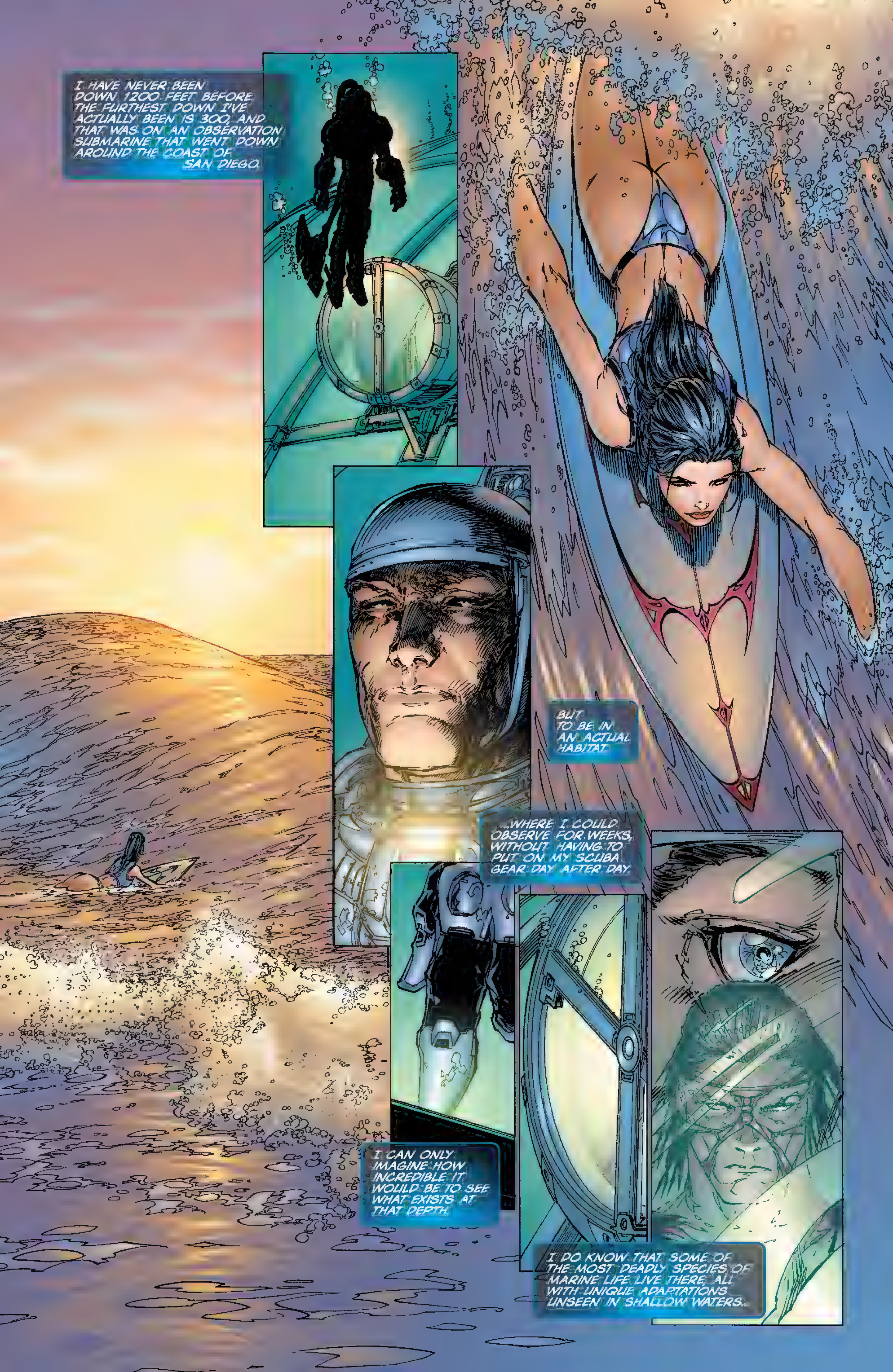
WHERE I COULD  
OBSERVE FOR WEEKS  
WITHOUT HAVING TO  
PUT ON MY SCUBA  
GEAR DAY AFTER DAY.



I CAN ONLY  
IMAGINE HOW  
INCREDIBLE IT  
WOULD BE TO SEE  
WHAT EXISTS AT  
THAT DEPTH.



I DO KNOW THAT SOME OF  
THE MOST DEADLY SPECIES OF  
MARINE LIFE LIVE THERE, ALL  
WITH UNIQUE ADAPTATIONS  
UNSEEN IN SHALLOW WATERS.







MANY OF THEM HAVE  
VERY SPECIAL TACTICS  
FOR ATTACKING PREY  
OR DEFENDING AGAINST  
PREDATORS

SOME HUNTERS HAVE  
POISONOUS BITES THAT WILL  
INCAPACITATE PREY FOR THEIR  
LEISURELY CONSUMPTION.  
SOME OCTOPI, SQUID OR  
ANEMONES DISAPPEAR IN  
A CLOUD OF INK TO EVADE  
A PREDATOR

THE MOST  
VICIOUS KILLERS  
ALERT THEIR  
ENEMIES WITH  
DISTINCTIVE  
MARKINGS OR  
VENOMOUS SPINES,  
AS IF TO SHOW  
THE VICTIMS THAT  
IT'S ALREADY  
TOO LATE

AN AMBUSH  
HAS BEGUN!

HERE, THE MOST  
DEADLY ATTACKS  
OCCUR IN  
NUMBERS.



AFTER ALL, A GROUP OF PREDATORS  
ATTACKING ALL AT ONCE CAN BE  
DECIDEDLY MORE DANGEROUS THAN  
A LONE HUNTER.

THERE IS  
STRENGTH  
IN NUMBERS.

AND  
CHAOS.

AH...  
TO BE DOWN  
THERE NOW.

HERE  
IS NOT  
BAD.

BUT BEING  
ON THE WATER IS  
MUCH DIFFERENT  
THAN BEING  
UNDER IT.

WHEN I WAS  
SIXTEEN, I WENT  
SCUBA DIVING  
FOR THE FIRST  
TIME.

MY INSTRUCTOR  
HAD ABOUT EIGHT  
OF US IN THE CLASS  
ON THE FIRST DAY  
AND WAS SHOWING US  
VERY BASIC SKILLS,  
LIKE HOW TO CLEAR  
THE REGULATOR AND  
HOW TO KEEP YOUR  
MASK FROM  
FOGGING.

WHILE HE WAS  
BUSY WITH SEVERAL  
OF THE OTHERS, I  
DECIDED TO GIVE IT  
A TRY ON MY  
OWN—I'VE NEVER  
BEEN THE TYPE TO  
WAIT FOR THE  
GROUP.

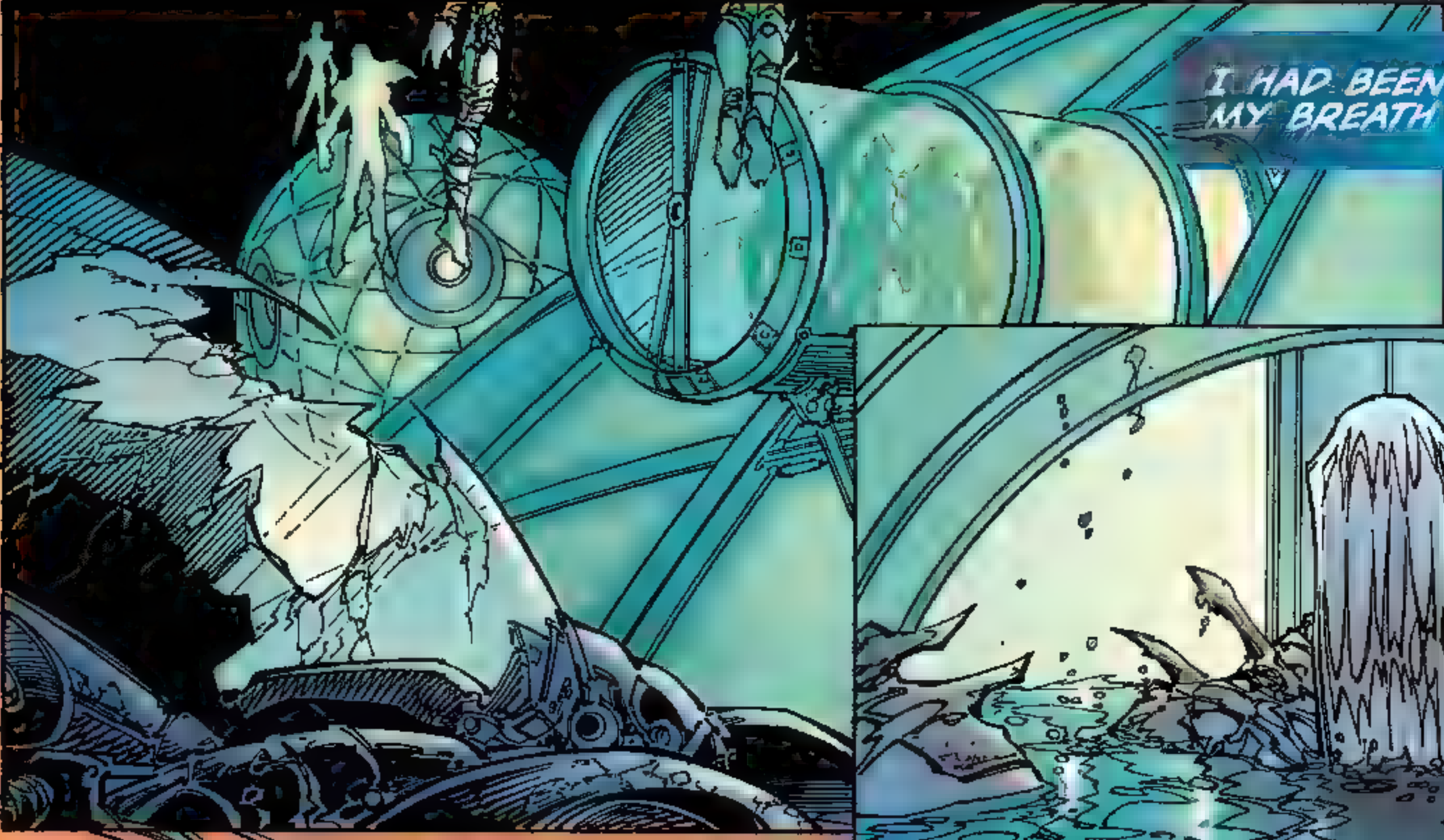
WITH ALL MY GEAR,  
I JUMPED OFF THE BOAT  
AND WENT STRAIGHT TO  
THE BOTTOM. WE WERE  
ONLY IN ABOUT 40 FEET  
OF WATER BUT A LOT CAN  
GO WRONG EVEN IN  
TEN FEET.

AT FIRST IT  
WAS INCREDIBLE...

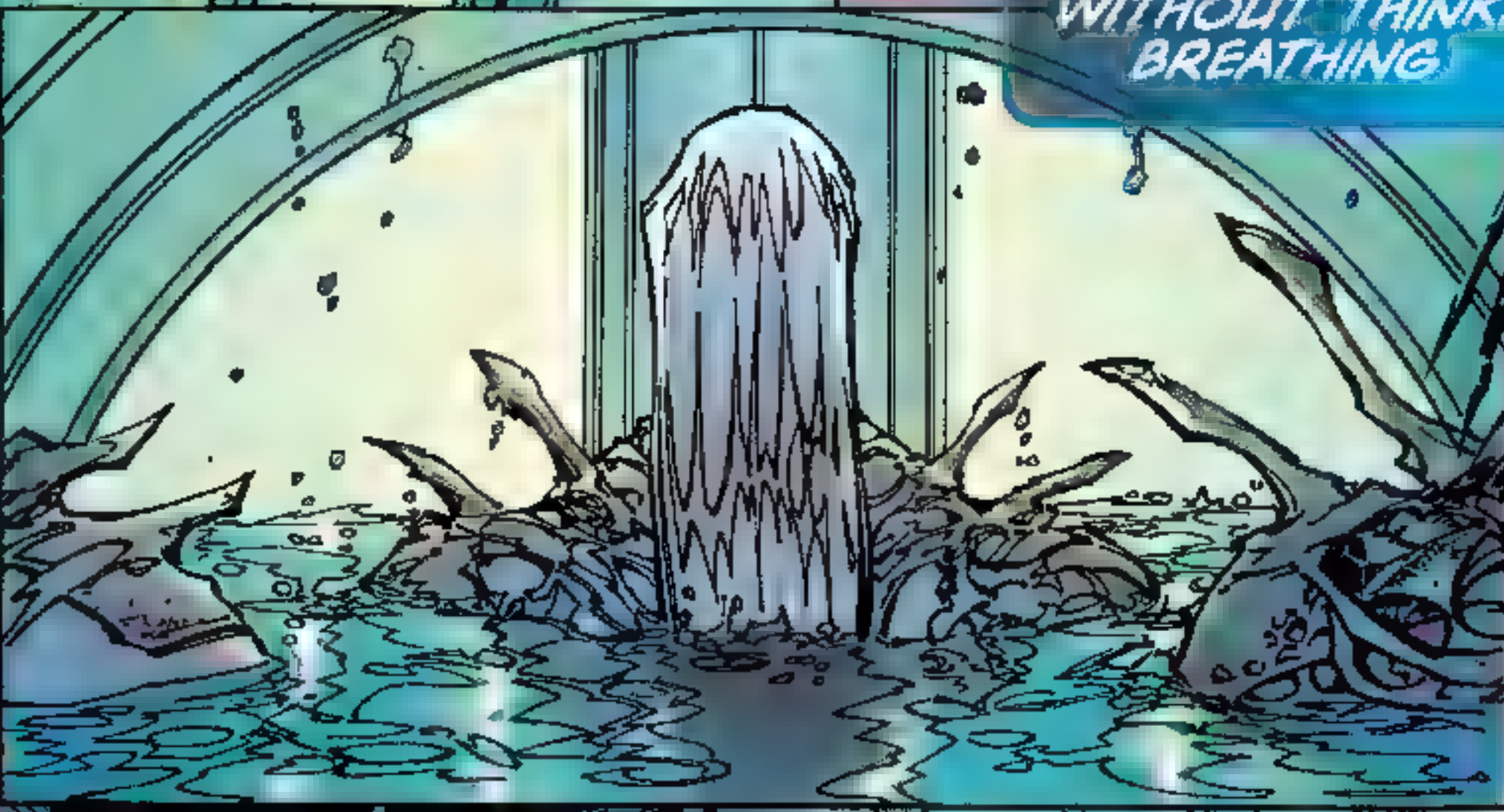
I WAS SWIMMING  
ALONG THE SIDE OF  
A REEF. THOUSANDS  
OF FISH WERE  
DARTING BY ME.

I WAS JUST  
GETTING COMFORTABLE  
WHEN I NOTICED  
SOMETHING STRANGE.





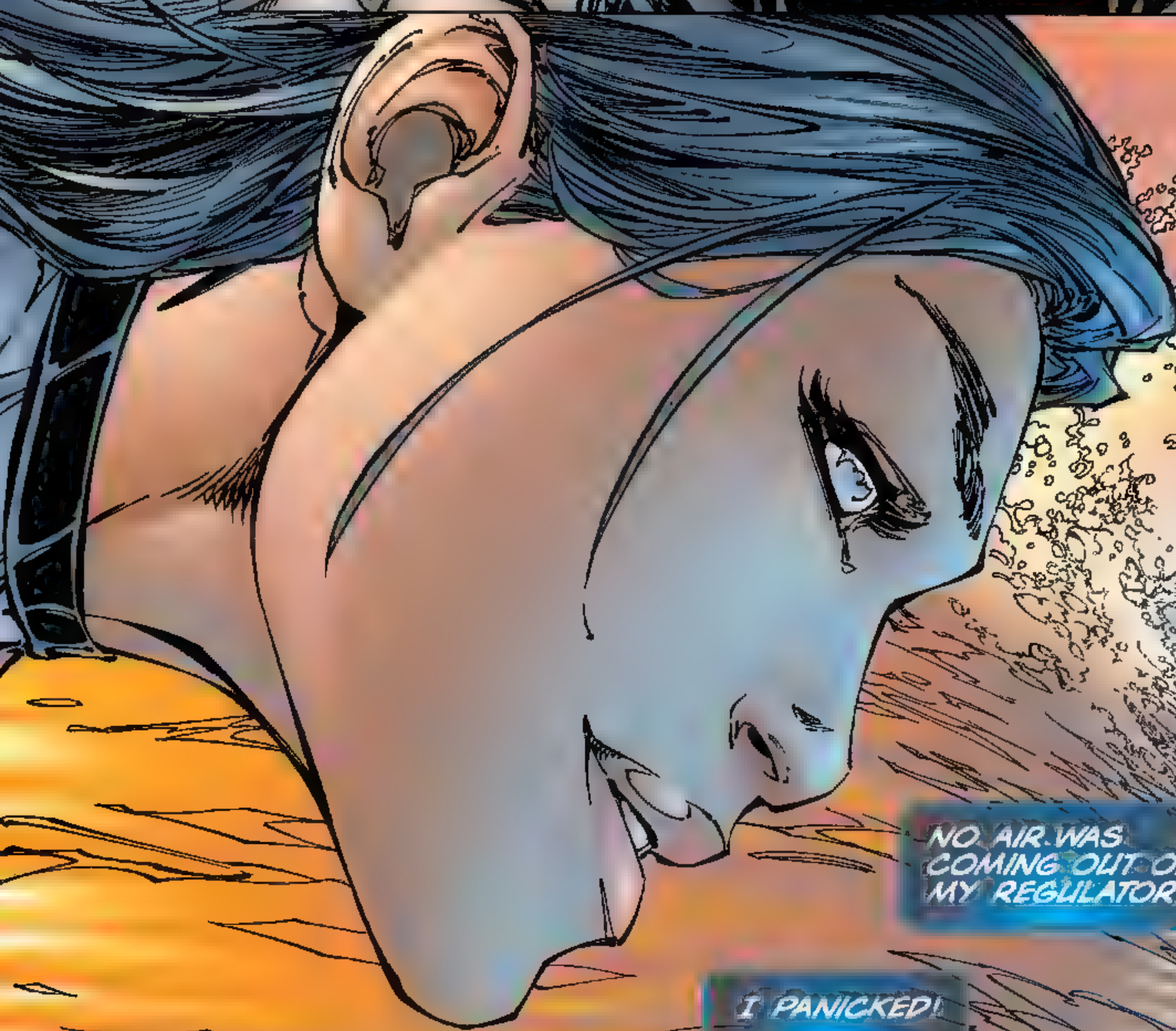
I HAD BEEN HOLDING  
MY BREATH THE WHOLE TIME



I HAD BEEN DOWN  
FOR AROUND FOUR MINUTES  
WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT  
BREATHING

ONCE I REALIZED  
THIS I LET OUT THE  
AIR AND TRIED TO  
BREATHE

I COULDN'T...



NO AIR WAS  
COMING OUT OF  
MY REGULATOR!

I PANICKED!

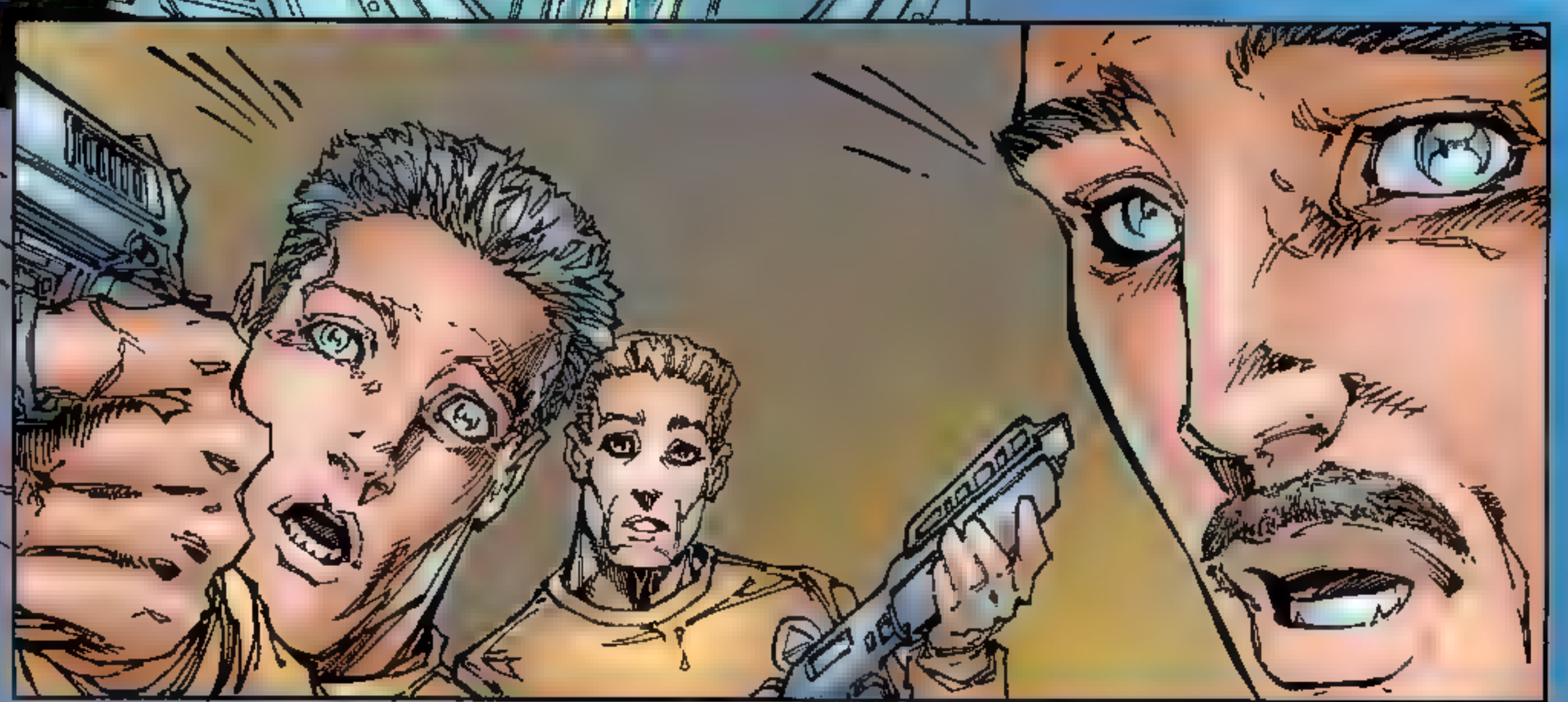
I LOOKED UP  
BUT THE BOAT  
WAS GONE...

MY LUNGS WERE  
KILLING ME AND I  
TRIED TO SWIM FOR  
THE SURFACE

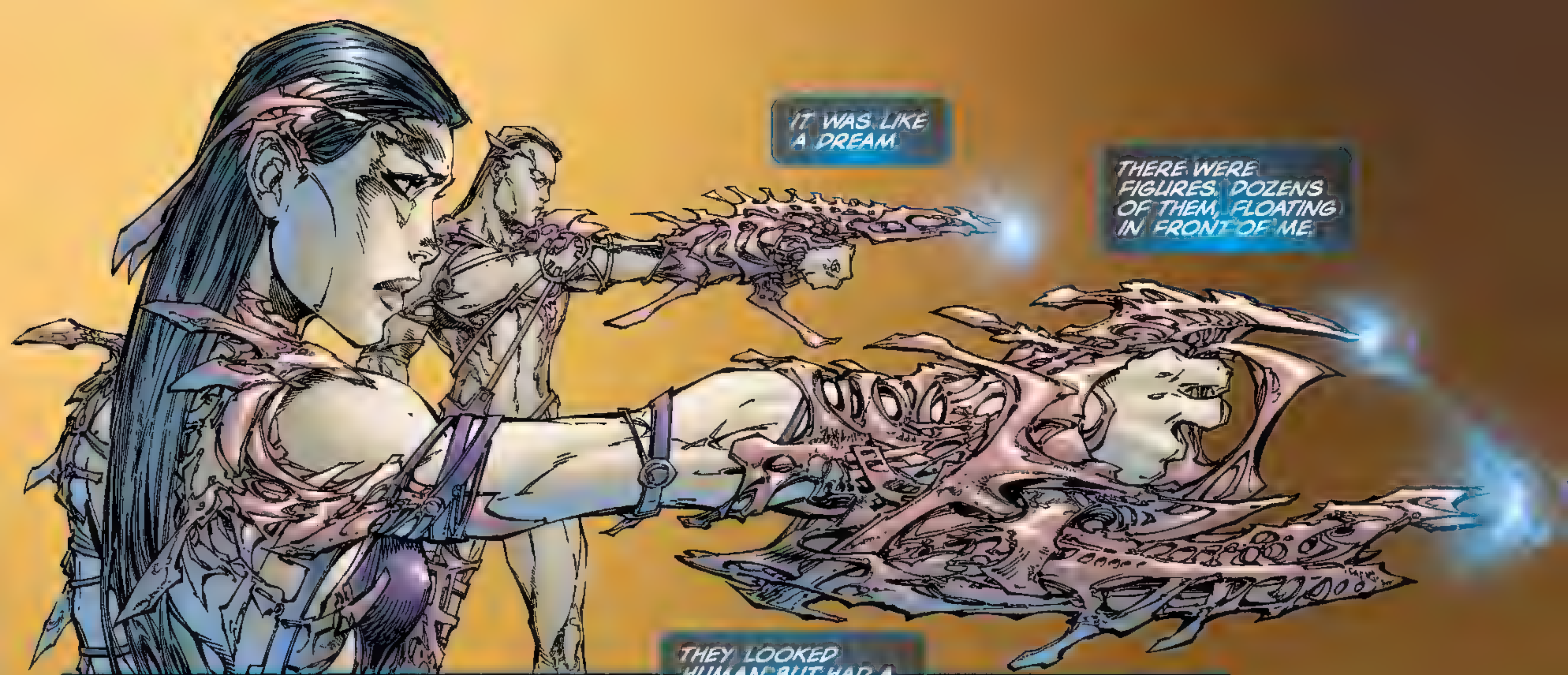
I GOT ABOUT  
20 FEET UP AND  
MY BODY WENT  
NUMB

I MUST'VE TAKEN  
IN A GALLON OF  
WATER WHEN I LOST  
CONSCIOUSNESS.

THAT WAS WHEN  
I SAW THEM FOR  
THE FIRST TIME...







IT WAS LIKE  
A DREAM.

THERE WERE  
FIGURES, DOZENS  
OF THEM, FLOATING  
IN FRONT OF ME.

THEY LOOKED  
HUMAN BUT HAD A  
PHOSPHORESCENT  
GLOW TO THEM.

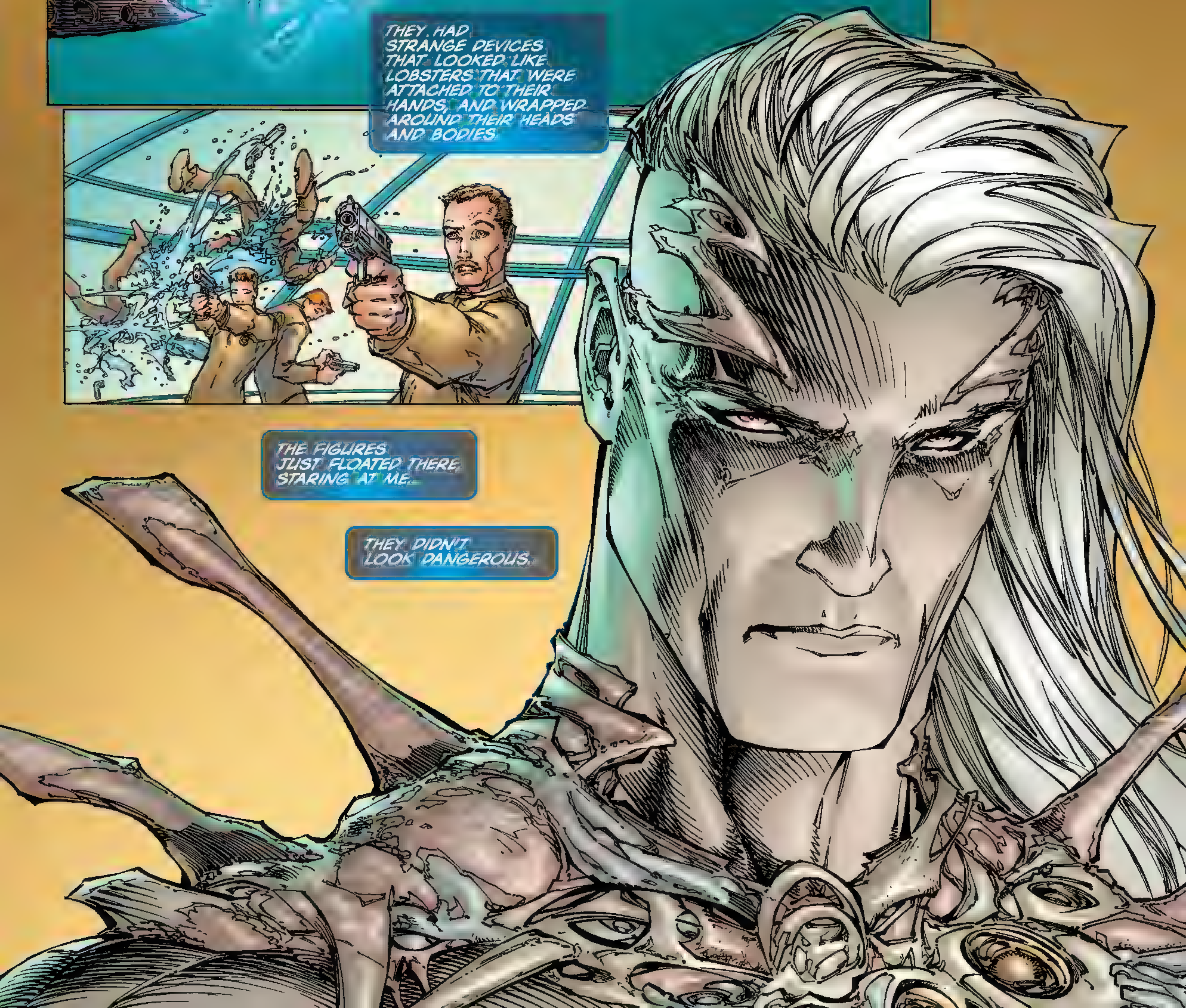


THEY HAD  
STRANGE DEVICES  
THAT LOOKED LIKE  
LOBSTERS THAT WERE  
ATTACHED TO THEIR  
HANDS, AND WRAPPED  
AROUND THEIR HEADS  
AND BODIES.



THE FIGURES  
JUST FLOATED THERE,  
STARING AT ME.

THEY DIDN'T  
LOOK DANGEROUS.







ONE OF THE  
FIGURES CAME  
FORWARD

HE WAS  
BEAUTIFUL, WITH  
LONG FLOWING  
HAIR AND HYPNOTIC  
EYES. HE PUT HIS  
HANDS OUT AND THE  
WATER STARTED TO  
GLOW IN FRONT  
OF HIM.

I STARTED  
TINGLING.

A WARM FIRE  
BEGAN TO EMANATE  
FROM MY BODY. THE  
FIGURE LOOKED AT  
ME AND SMILED.

AND...

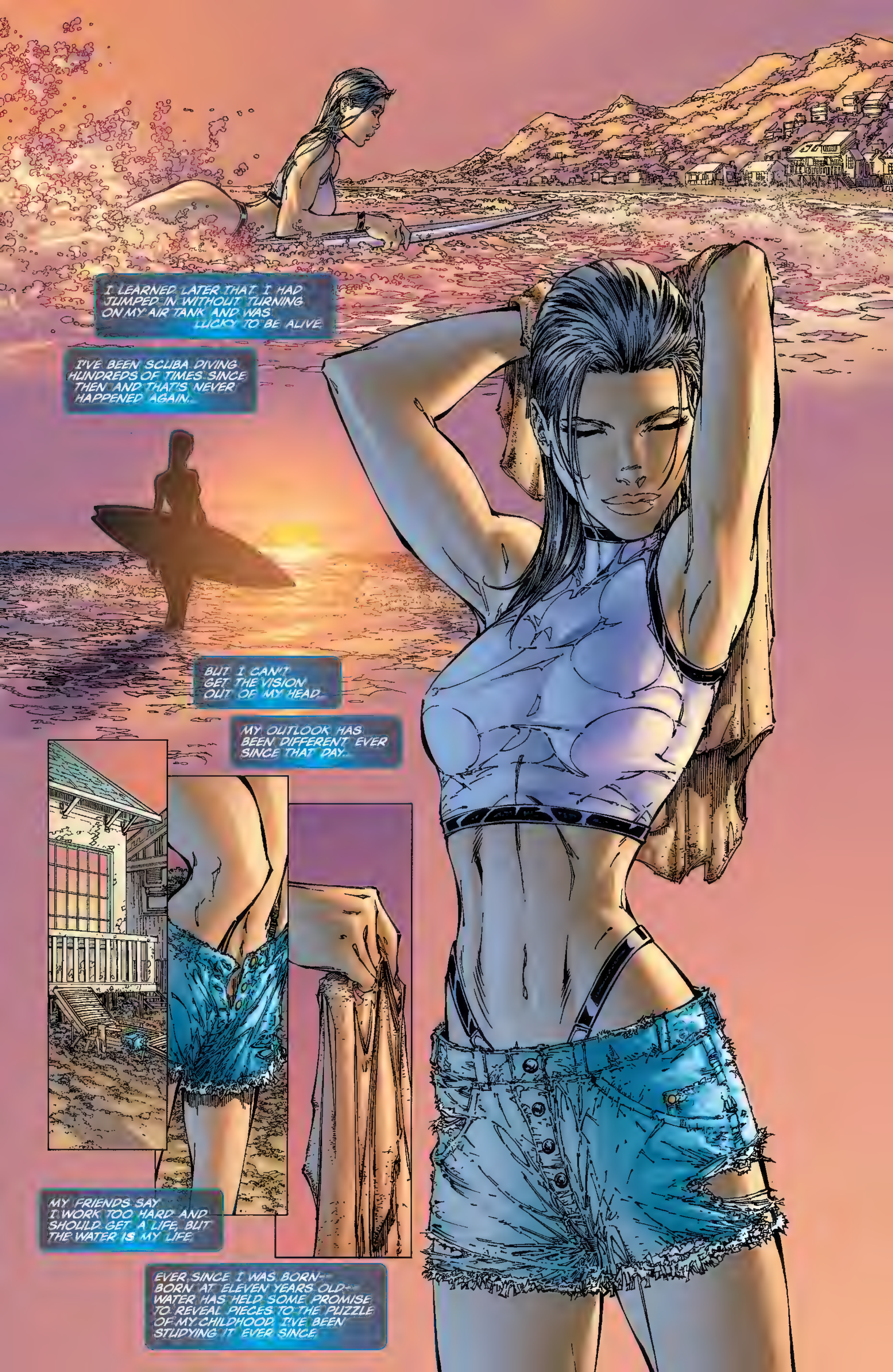
HE SUDDENLY CAME  
FORWARD AND GRABBED  
ME. HIS FACE CHANGED TO THAT  
OF MY INSTRUCTOR. HE WAS  
DRAGGING ME TOWARD  
THE SURFACE.

I WAS PUT ON THE  
BACK OF THE DIVE BOAT.  
THE OTHER DIVERS IN THE  
CLASS CIRCLED AROUND  
ME AND WERE CRYING  
WHILE THE INSTRUCTOR  
WAS BLOWING INTO MY  
MOUTH. I TRIED TO SPEAK  
BUT NOTHING WORKED.

AFTER ABOUT  
30 SECONDS, I SPIT  
OUT SOME WATER AND  
COULD FEEL MY BODY  
AGAIN. THEY TOOK THE  
BOAT TO SHORE AND  
SAID I NEEDED TO GO  
TO THE HOSPITAL.

BUT I  
ACTUALLY  
FELT OK.



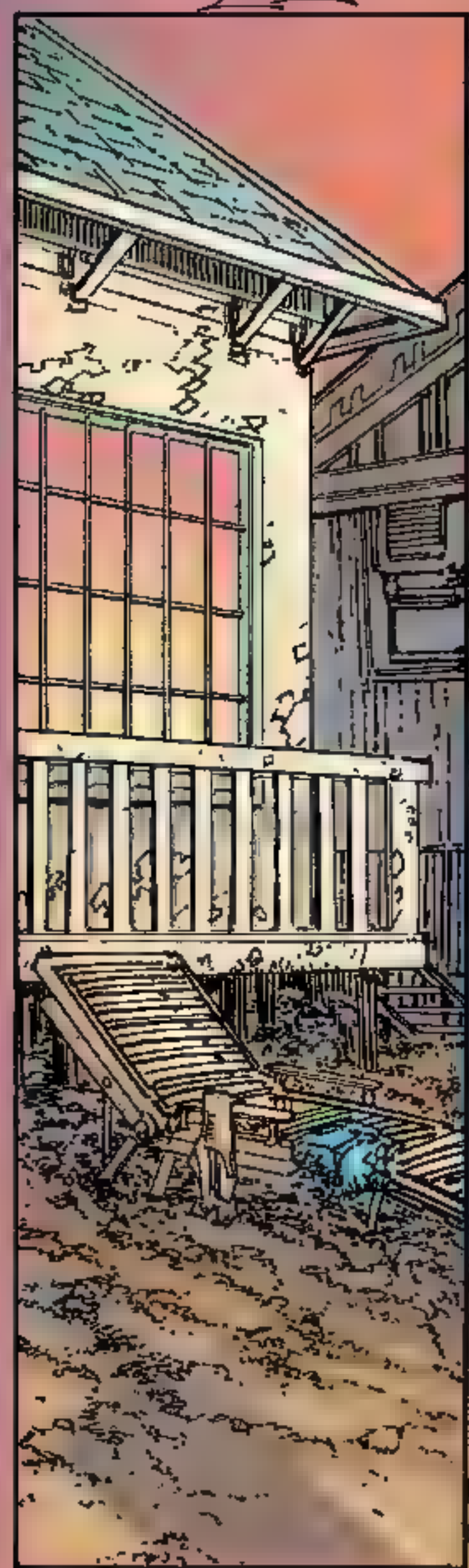


I LEARNED LATER THAT I HAD  
JUMPED IN WITHOUT TURNING  
ON MY AIR TANK AND WAS  
LUCKY TO BE ALIVE.

I'VE BEEN SCUBA DIVING  
HUNDREDS OF TIMES SINCE  
THEN AND THAT'S NEVER  
HAPPENED AGAIN.

BUT I CAN'T  
GET THE VISION  
OUT OF MY HEAD.

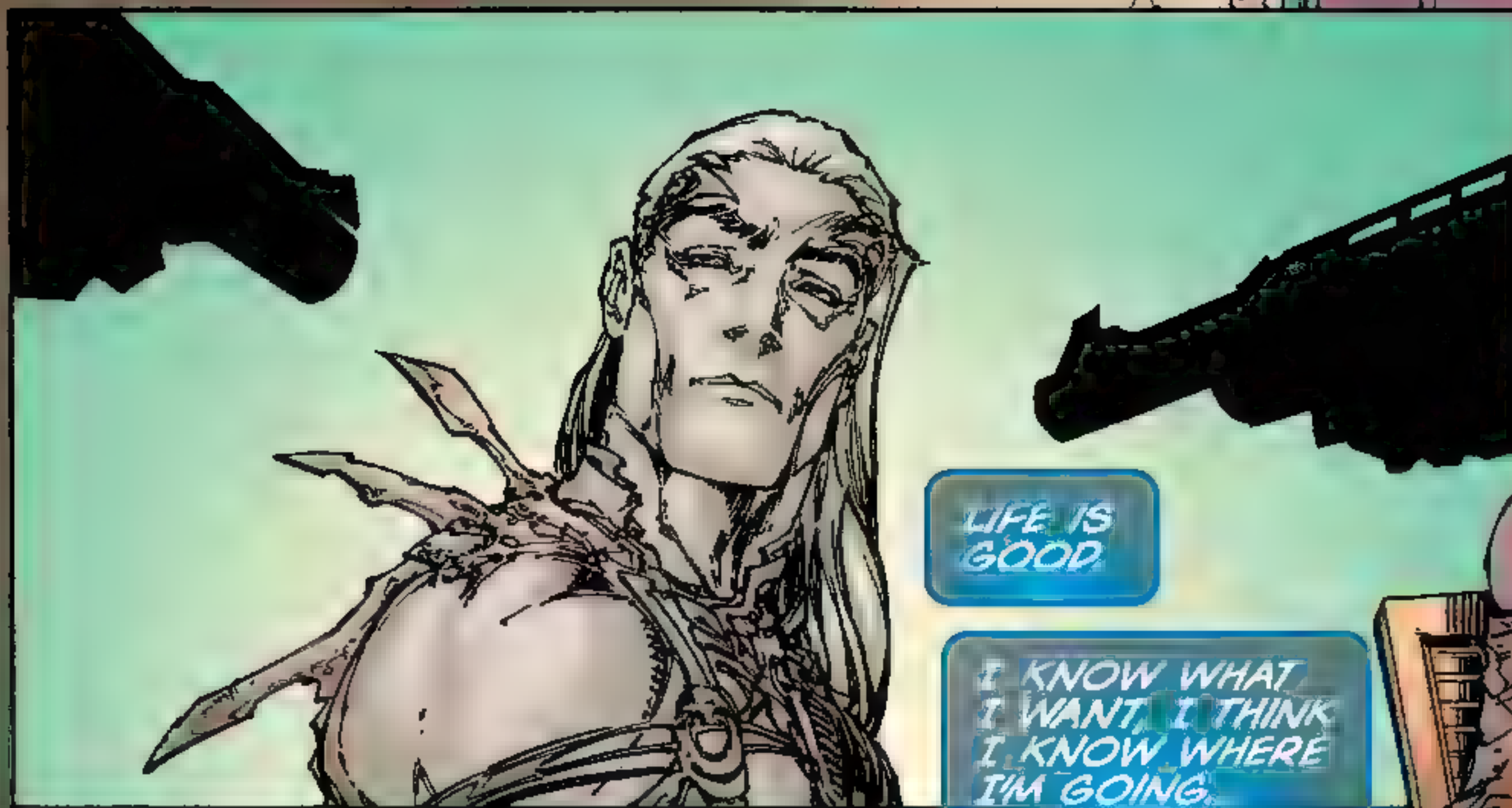
MY OUTLOOK HAS  
BEEN DIFFERENT EVER  
SINCE THAT DAY.



MY FRIENDS SAY  
I WORK TOO HARD AND  
SHOULD GET A LIFE, BUT  
THE WATER IS MY LIFE.

EVER SINCE I WAS BORN--  
BORN AT ELEVEN YEARS OLD--  
WATER HAS HELD SOME PROMISE  
TO REVEAL PIECES TO THE PUZZLE  
OF MY CHILDHOOD. I'VE BEEN  
STUDYING IT EVER SINCE.



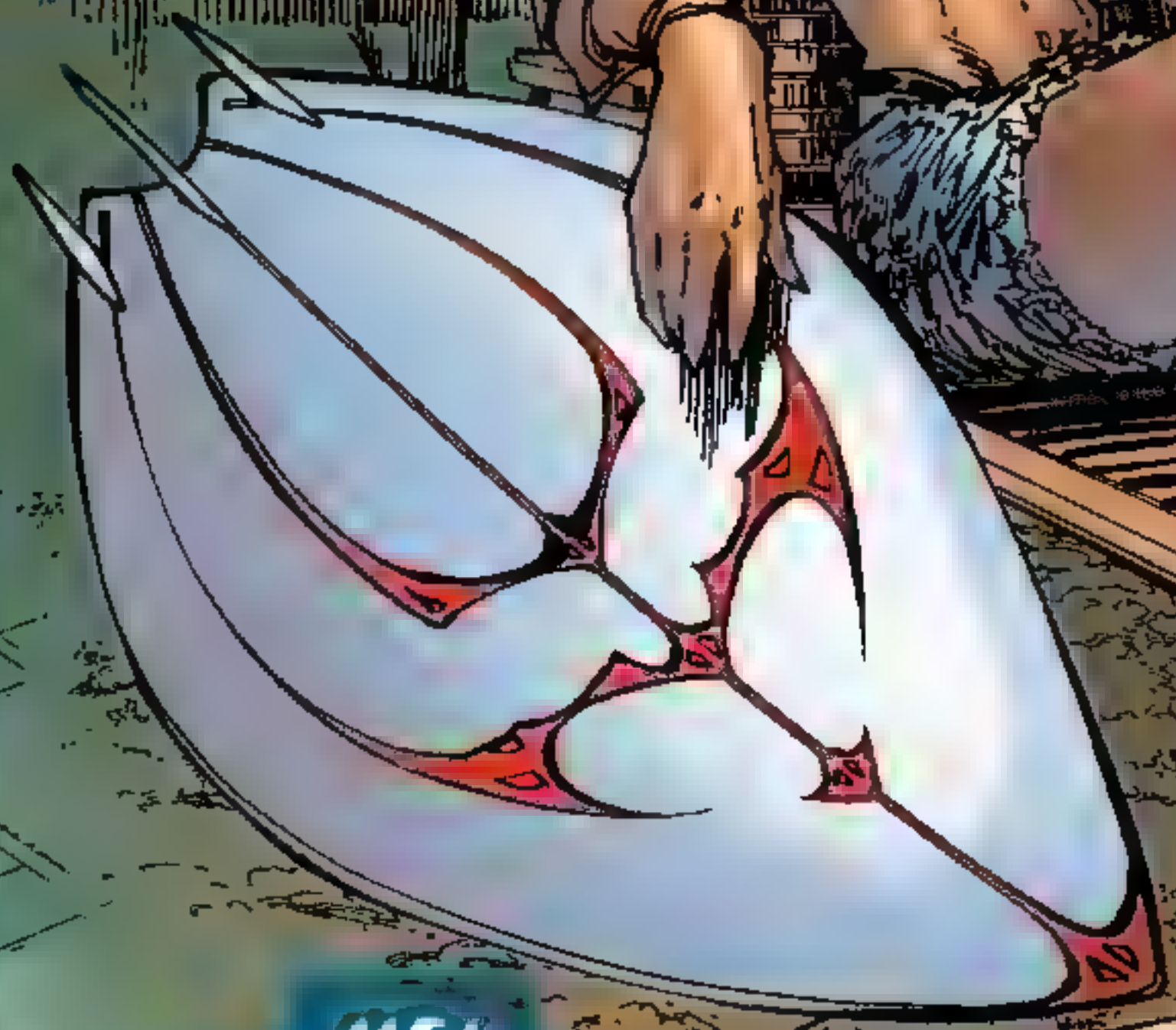


LIFE IS GOOD.

I KNOW WHAT I WANT. I THINK I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING.

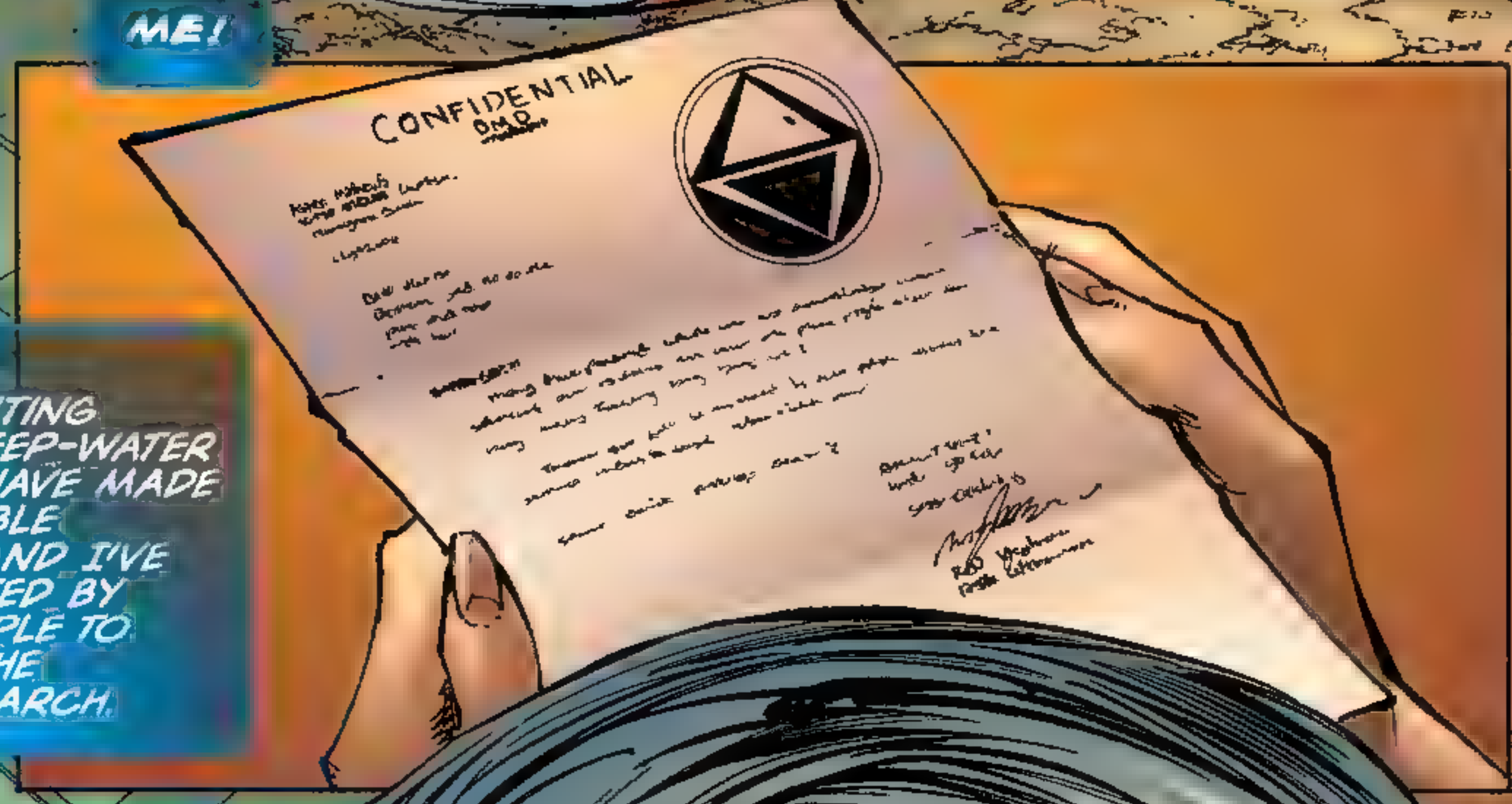
AND NOW.

THE LETTER I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR FOR THREE MONTHS!



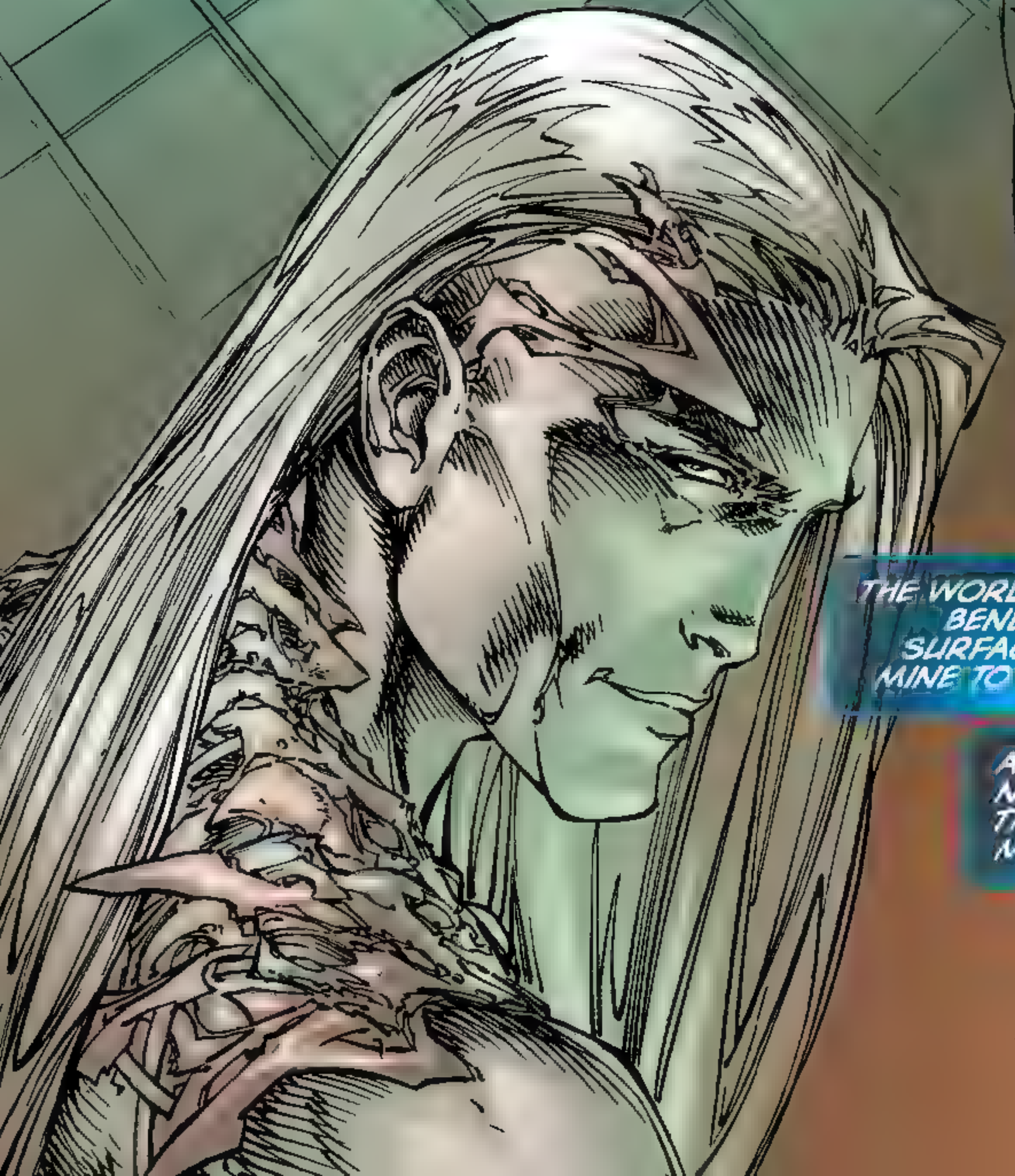
THEY ACTUALLY WANT ME.

ME!



DMD INC. IS FORMALLY INVITING ME TO THEIR DEEP-WATER HABITAT. THEY HAVE MADE SOME INCREDIBLE DISCOVERIES AND I'VE BEEN REQUESTED BY THEIR TOP PEOPLE TO ASSIST WITH THE RESEARCH.

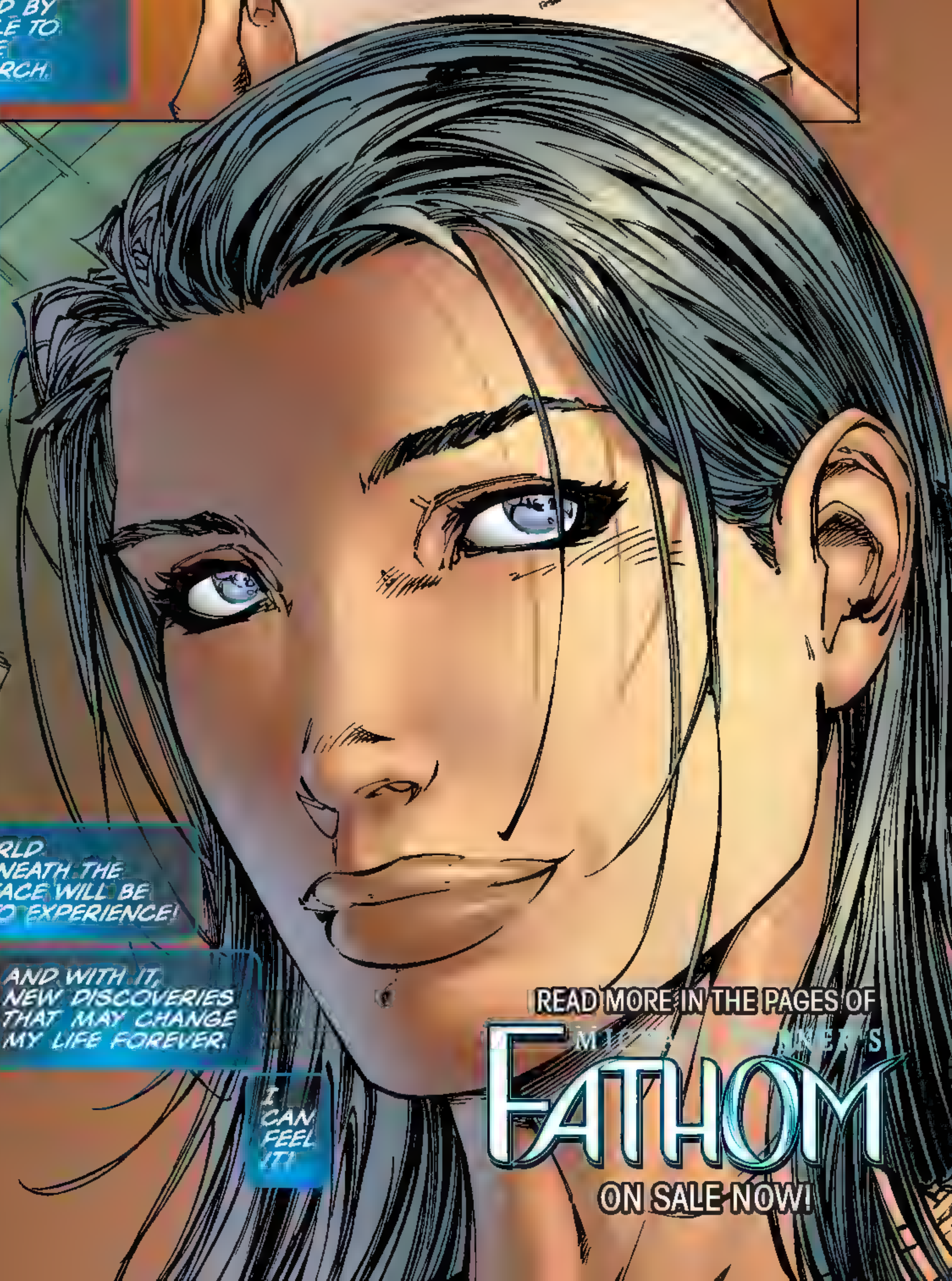
I AM ACTUALLY GOING... IN EIGHT WEEKS!



THE WORLD BENEATH THE SURFACE WILL BE MINE TO EXPERIENCE!

AND WITH IT, NEW DISCOVERIES THAT MAY CHANGE MY LIFE FOREVER.

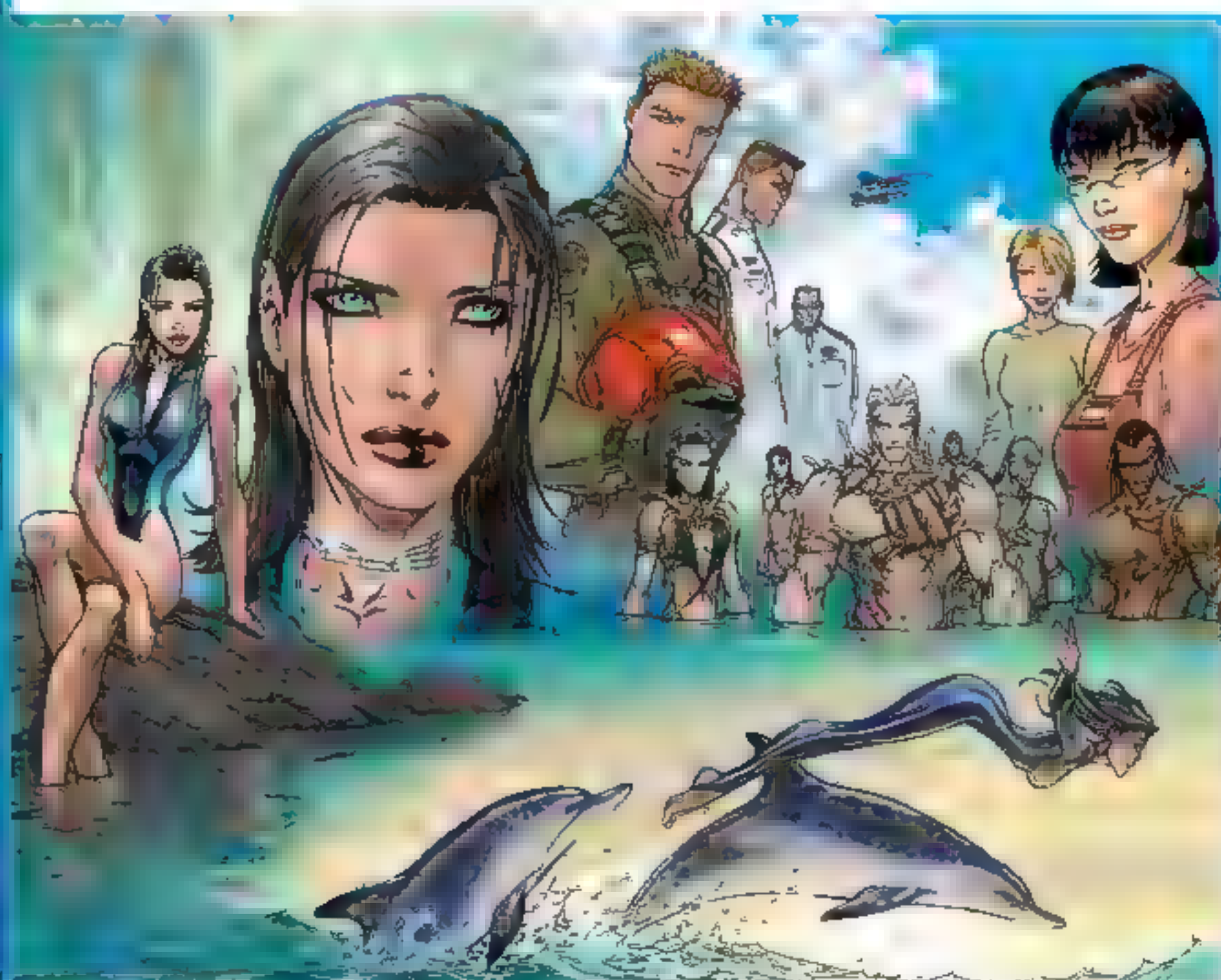
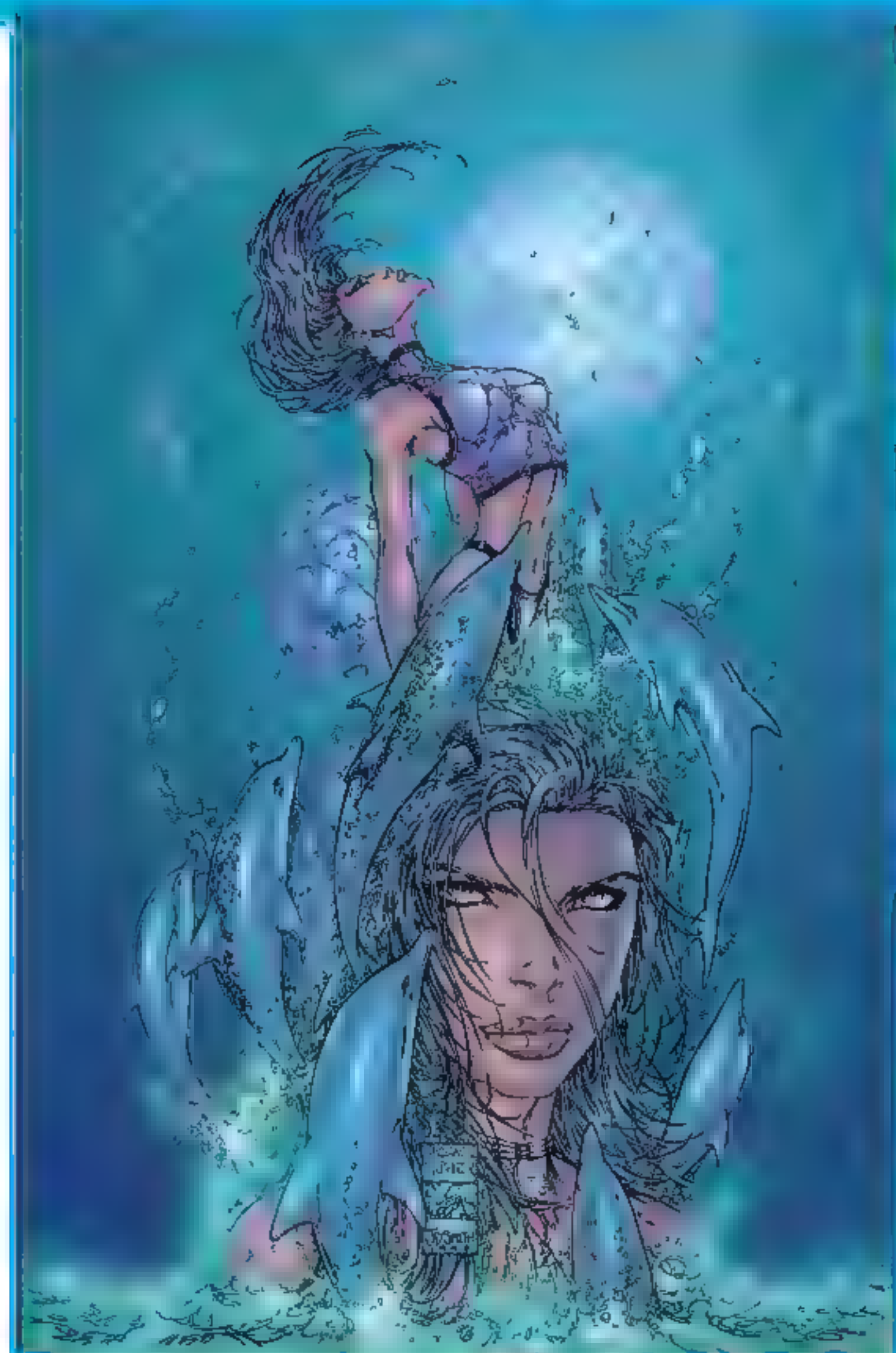
I CAN FEEL IT!



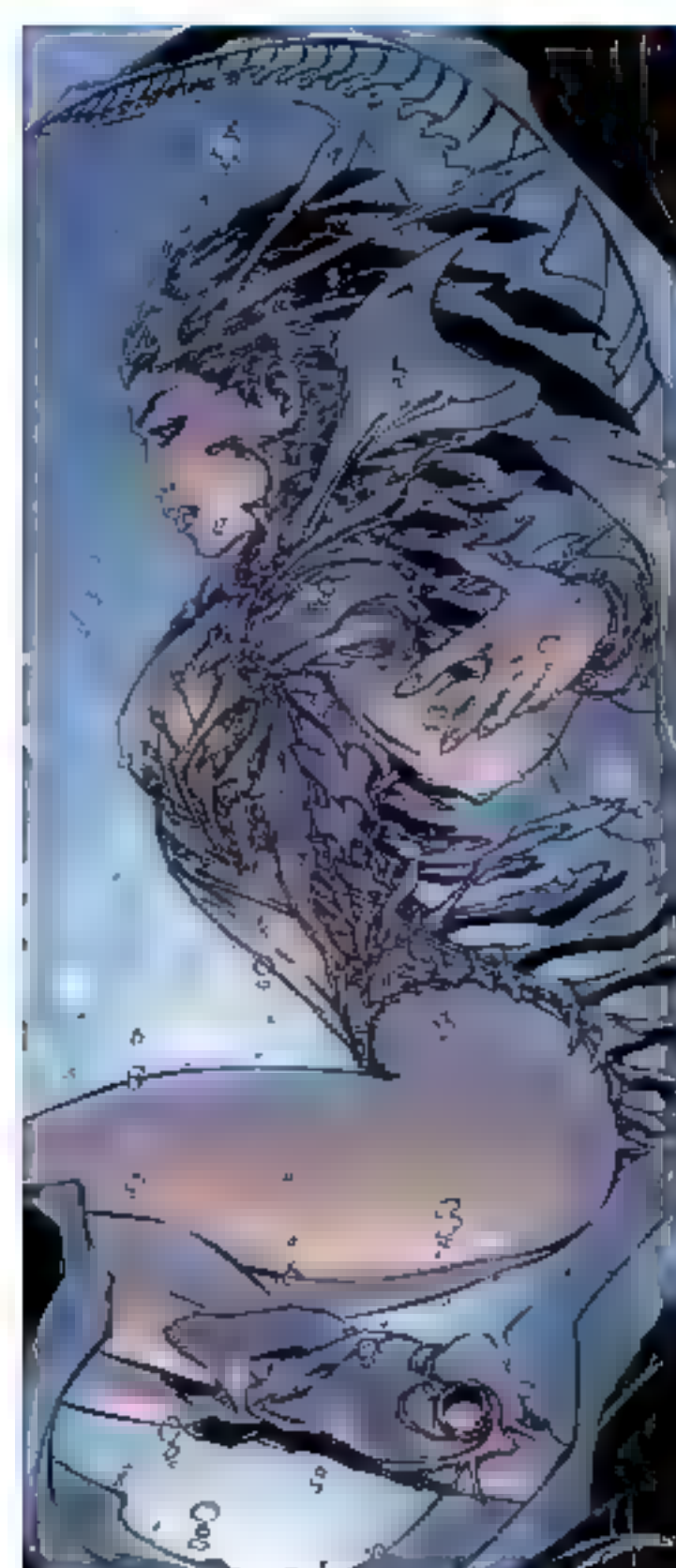
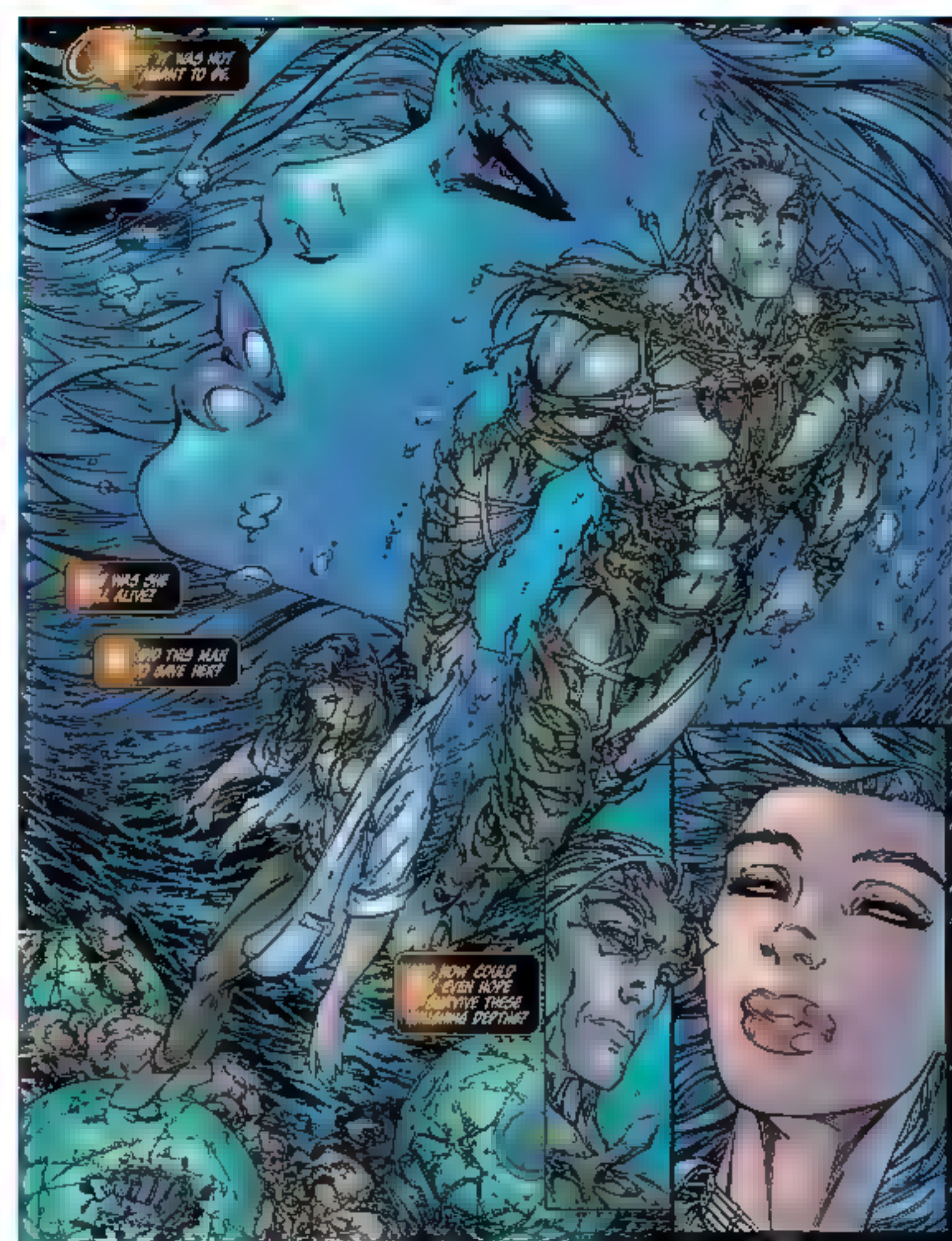
READ MORE IN THE PAGES OF  
**FATHOM**  
ON SALE NOW!



# FATHOM Volume 1 — “The World Below”

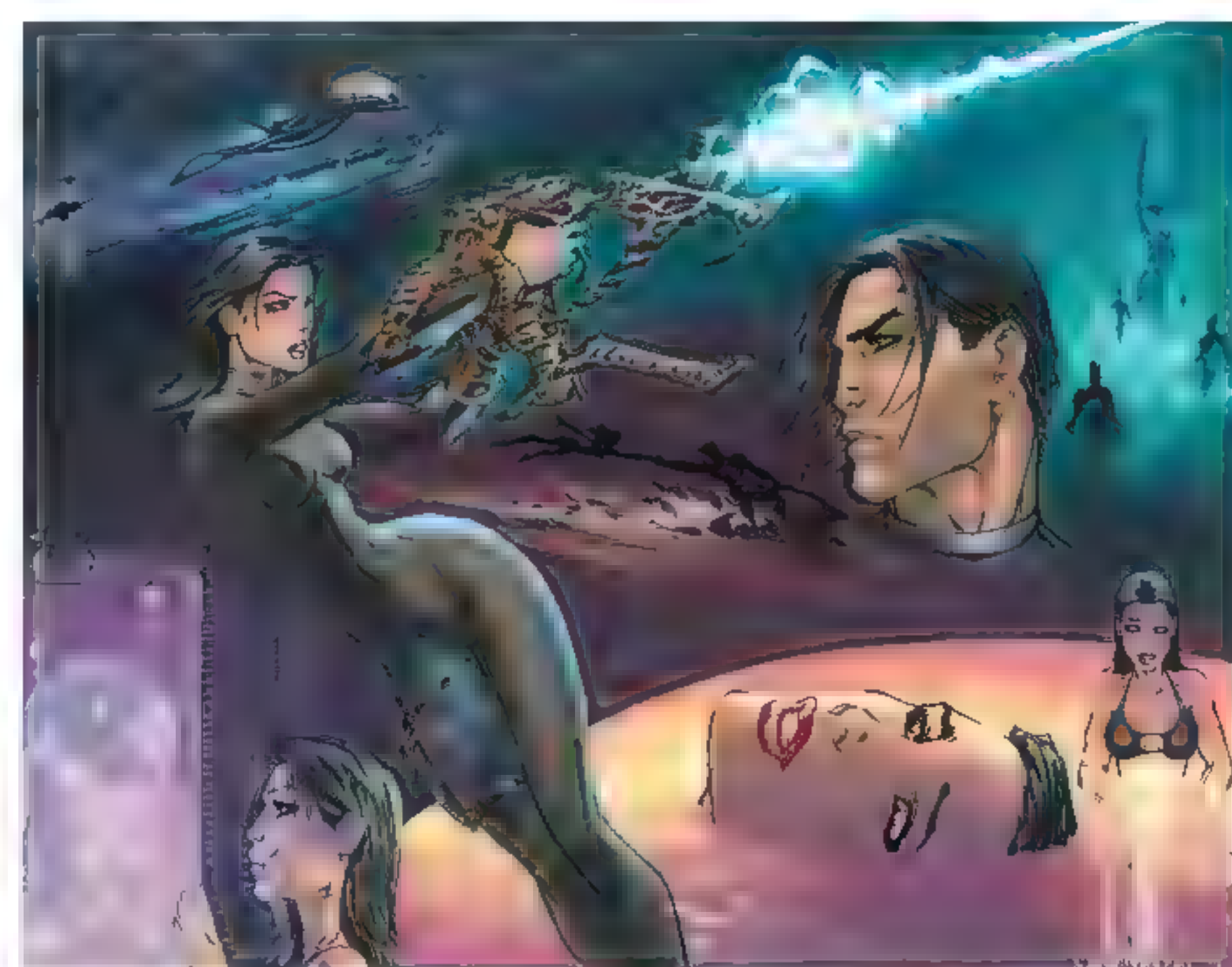


In 1984, the cruise ship “Paradise” docked following a ten-year absence. Captain Matthews, the ship’s chief officer, would usher a young and frightened stowaway, Aspen Matthews, ashore following the reappearance. However, the watchful eye of the U.S. Navy, along with a mysterious figure made of water, were also keeping tabs on the young girl.

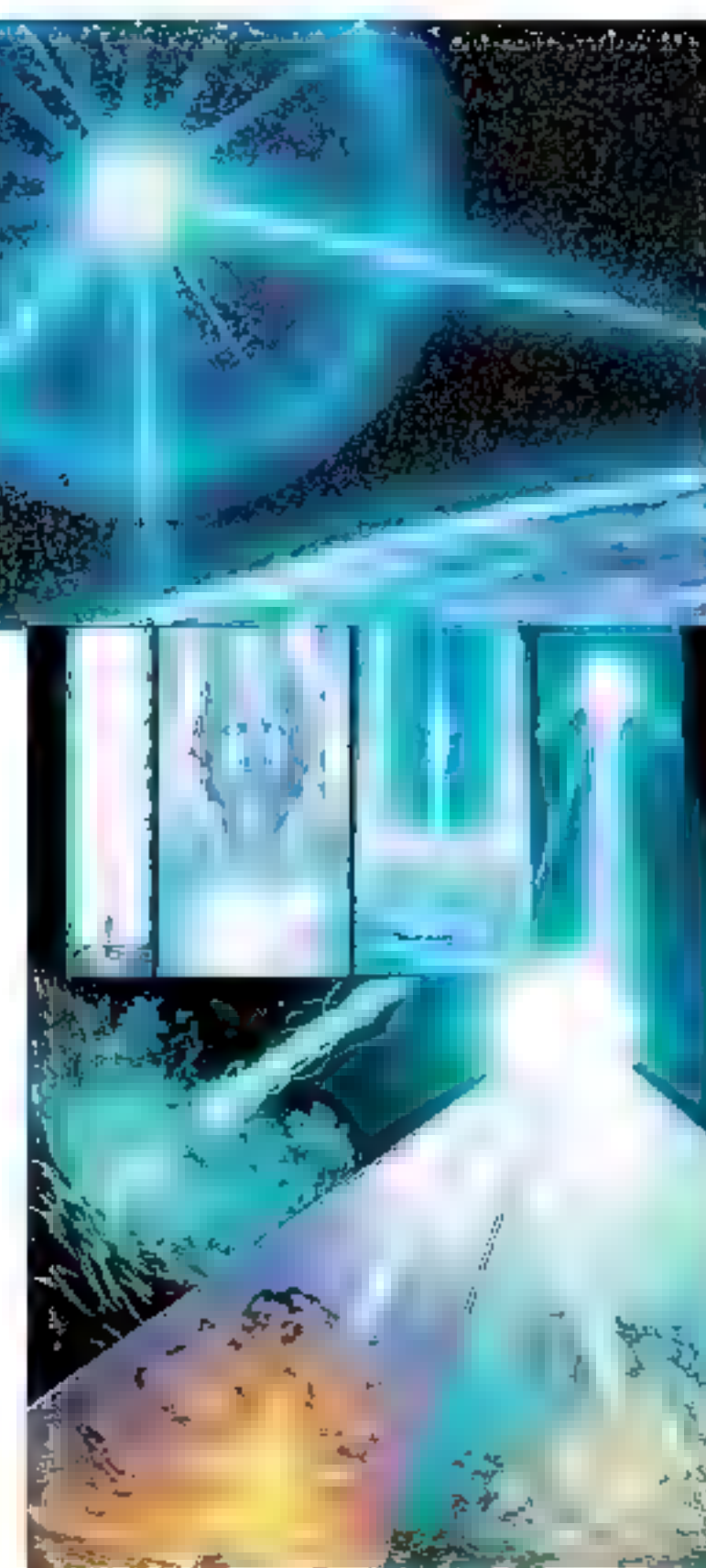


In the present, Aspen Matthews grew up to become an Olympic swimmer and marine biologist with a keen instinct and love for the ocean. She was invited under the surface to the Deep Marine Discovery (DMD) to research an alien-like transport vehicle inside the facility. Yet, an even more shocking discovery for her was that of the Blue dissident, Killian, clearly a non-human entity.

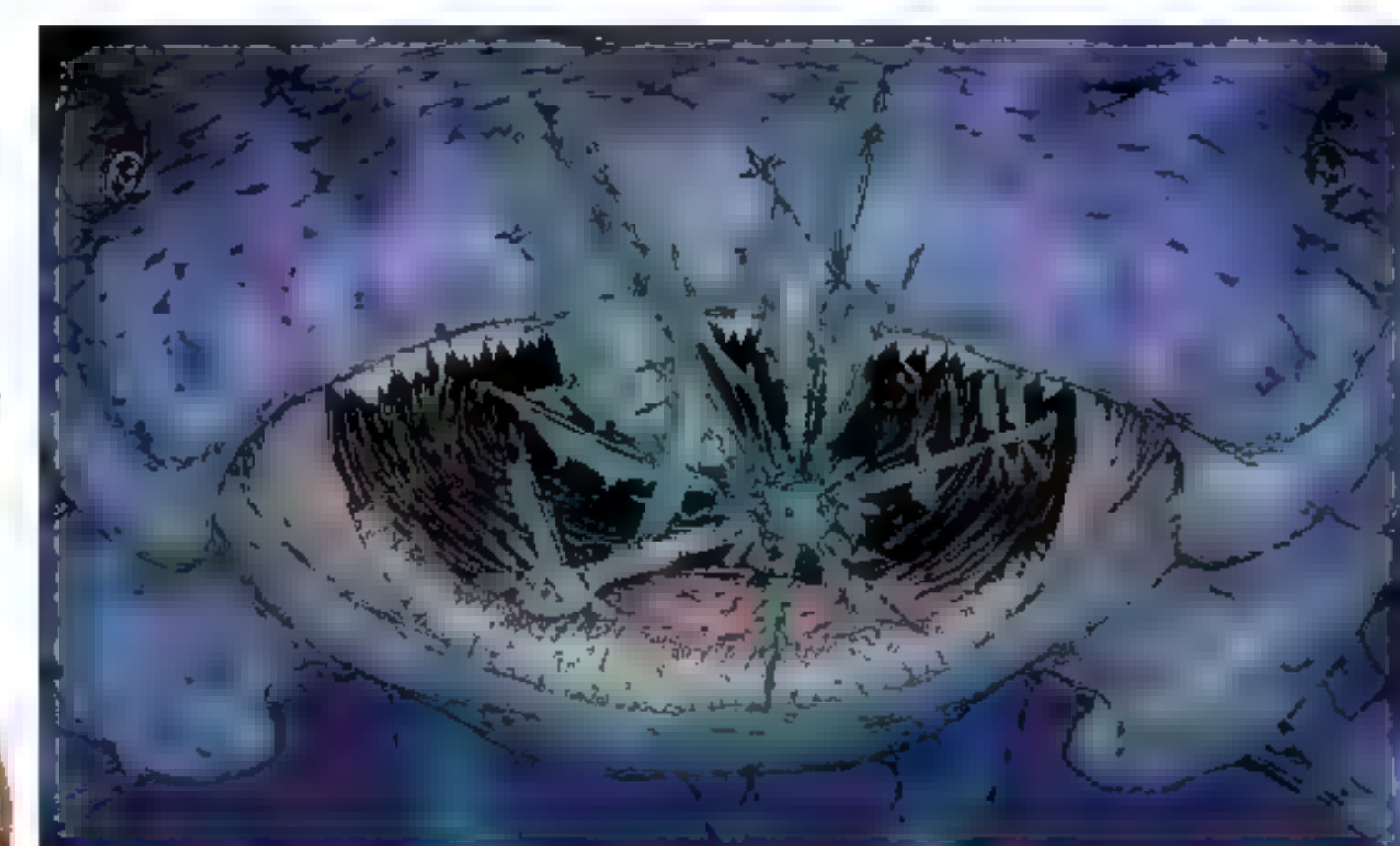
At the DMD, Aspen encountered Cannon Hawke, a United States and Japanese emissary that both sides trusted, along with his aide, Akiko Nigata. Aspen’s time spent in research was short-lived, however, as U.S. Navy pilot Chance Calloway accidentally fired on the facility after mistakenly attacking a strange vessel under the surface.



Aspen was rescued by the mysterious water figure following the destruction of the DMD and her water form emerged much to their surprise. Later, Cannon attempted to rescue Aspen from Killian’s band of dissidents but was unable to keep them from kidnapping her. Aspen would soon learn how to manifest her powers under the tutelage of Killian, as he used her as the powerful catalyst for his new army and The Blue Sun weapon he created to open a gateway to the ancients of The Blue.



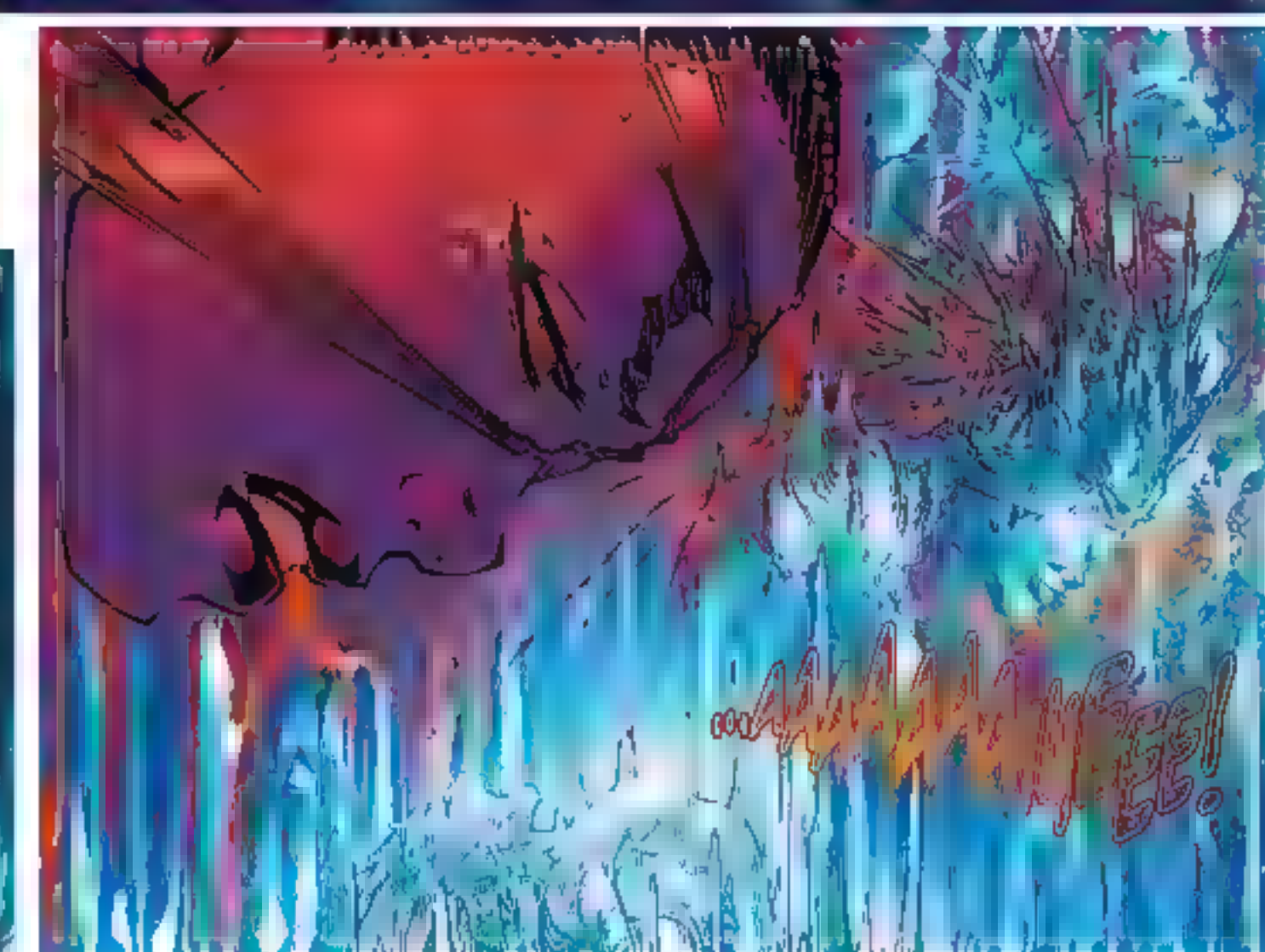
A fight between Cannon and The Blue emerged, but Killian managed to throw Aspen into the Blue Sun. Yet, the move backfired, as she absorbed its energy into her water form and used her immense power to dissipate Killian across the planet.



## Other Volume 1 Highlights:

Aspen encounters The Spelunker, a ship captained by Baha, and joins his adventure in hunting down the elusive “Big Moe,” a massive creature of myth that turned out to be a reality.

The Ice Queen Vana set in motion her plan to kidnap and torture Cannon Hawke in retribution for her son Taras’ death at his hands. However, Aspen was able to rescue Cannon by defeating Vana and encapsulating her in ice.



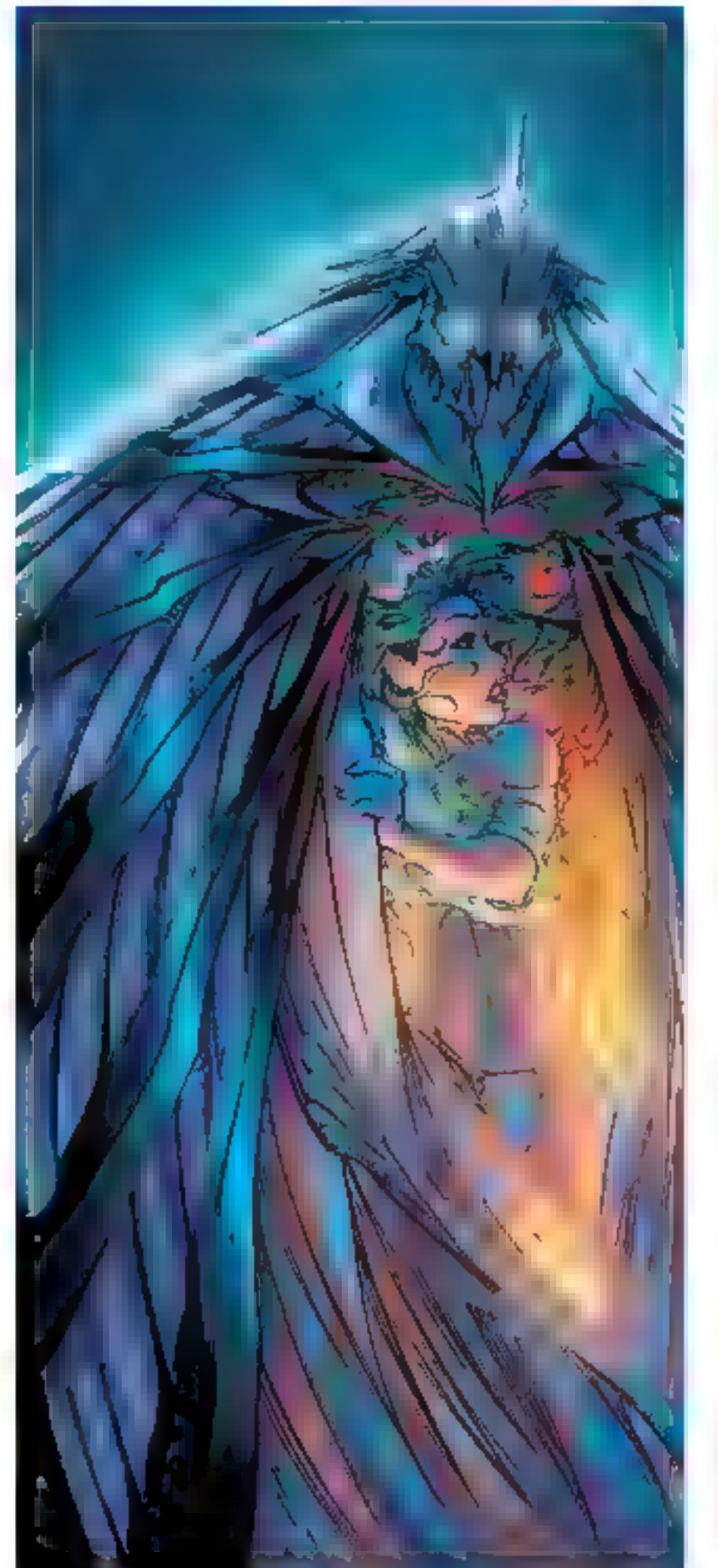


# FATHOM Volume 2 — “Into The Deep”



From the depths they rose—The Black—mythical ancestors to The Blue and deadly guardians of the ocean. Aspen Matthew’s first encounter with these powerful beings of myth proved not to be one of awe and discovery, but rather one for survival. Following years of dormancy, The Black ascended to the surface, abducting Aspen, while fending off the Blue warriors Casque, Kiani, Brande and Siphon.

Awakening far beneath the sea in the sanctuary of The Black, the astonishment of their existence only began to grow for Aspen as she was introduced to her true father, Rahger. An imposing figurehead of The Black, Rahger elucidated to Aspen the importance of knowing her true origin, along with The Black’s objective—to protect their lifeblood, the water, from Admiral Maylander and his growing war campaign against The Blue. However, Aspen, weary of again falling under the direction of yet another group’s personal objective, rejected their call to arms and returned to the surface. The Black decided to press forward with their plan without her.



While Aspen returned to San Diego, Admiral Maylander dealt a destructive blow to The Blue as his submarines attacked the underwater city of Saba, killing scores of its inhabitants. Meanwhile, after learning of Captain Matthew’s disappearance, Aspen, along with Chance, took a road trip to the desert town of Boulder City to find him. Upon their arrival, the pair found a drugged and weakened Captain Matthews,



but realize too late that

Maylander tricked them into an ambush. Using her powers to escape the trap, the trio was chased relentlessly to the Hoover Dam by the might of the U.S. Navy. Moments away from capture, Aspen uses the dam’s reservoir water to engulf their forces, freeing them to escape.

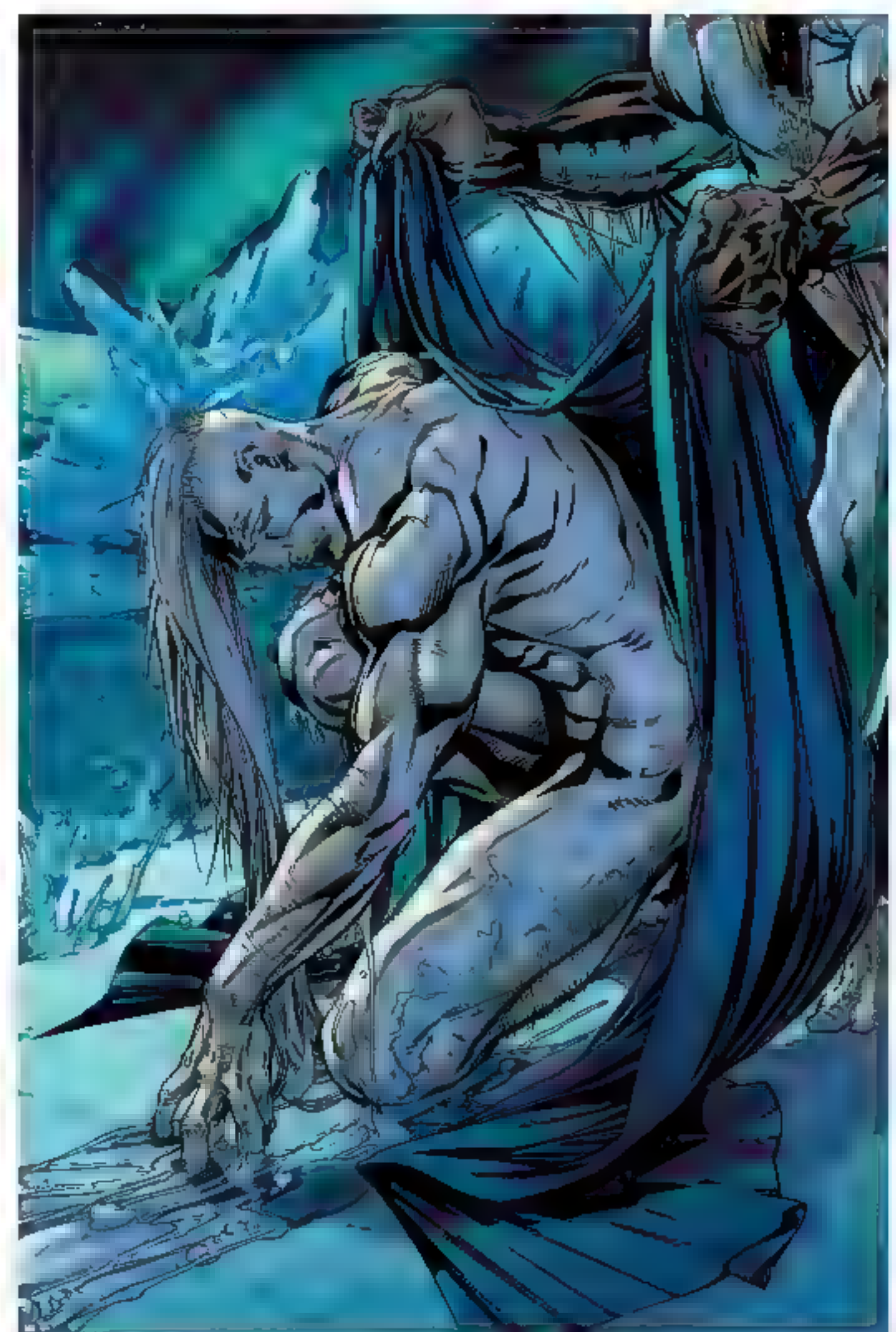
Returning to the surface, Aspen and Chance’s feelings for each other began to grow as the pair shared a kiss. However, their moment was interrupted by the arrival of Aspen’s long lost brother, Finn, who rose from the shore and pleaded for Aspen to return to the Blue and help fight for their survival. Aspen reluctantly agreed to help, departing into the water with Finn after leaving Chance and Captain Matthews on the beach. Aspen and Finn—brother and sister—returned to Saba to view the destruction firsthand.

Yet, their observation was spoiled when the Humans, who had taken over the city, attacked Finn. The pair narrowly escaped the Humans’ wrath before Cannon Hawke rescued them, and Aspen was forced to use her powers to restore Finn’s health.

With the stage set for a battle to end Maylander’s assault, the odds were stacked against The Blue as the Admiral unveiled his most destructive weapon yet—a nuclear bomb set to detonate in Muria, the capital city of The Blue. Aspen and Cannon joined the Blue warriors Kiani, Brande and Siphon as they fought Maylander’s forces in the waters near the Blue outpost of Dor. With the newfound elite powers of Kiani, and the might of Aspen’s ability to manipulate the seas, the group defeated the Humans, destroying their massive fleet. However, the victory did not come without great sacrifice, as Brande, in one last heroic feat, removed the nuclear bomb through a hydroport, saving the city, but killing himself in the process.



With the Humans defeated, and The Blue beginning the reconstruction of their world after such devastation, Aspen returned to the surface in Mexico and reunited with Chance and the only father she trusts—Captain Matthews. While unbeknownst to them, in a remote icy location, another of Aspen’s past teachers rose to the surface to continue his mission—Killian, who was in disguise as her missing brother, Finn, all along.





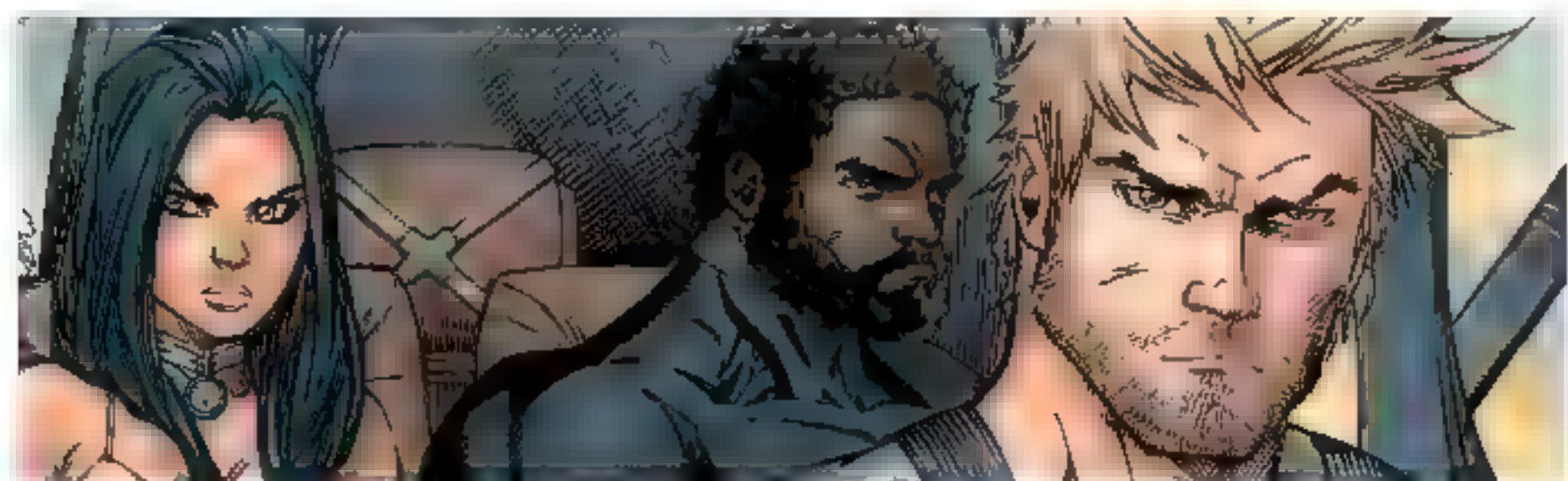
# FATHOM Volume 3 — “Worlds at War”



Following the destructive battle with Admiral Maylander and the Human forces under his control, Aspen and Chance took refuge in a small town in Mexico. Much too soon, their peaceful interlude was interrupted by the unannounced arrival of Cannon Hawke. With grim news about her true brother Finn's capture by the Humans, Cannon is able to convince Aspen to return to The Blue once again. This time, Chance decides to join Aspen in the depths. However, in Muria, Aspen was annoyed to discover that Cannon merely sought to use Aspen's power to defeat Killian, who returned to form and was attacking Human installations. Aspen and Chance decide not to fight and leave the city, but not before freeing The Blue's only captured Human Navy Seal named Anderson, a soldier with invaluable knowledge of Finn's whereabouts.

As the group returned to the surface, they followed Anderson's directions to a covert military base deep in the

Colorado mountains. After leaving Anderson in a detained state, the two use a combination of Aspen's powers and Chance's quick thinking in order to infiltrate the base, eventually locating and freeing Finn. But, not before Chance's brother, Chris Calloway, trapped them and unveiled his latest weapon in the fight against The Blue—his new and improved Tiger Shark prototypes—heavily armed for battle. Aspen and Chance narrowly escaped the base and the powerful new breed of Tiger Shark soldiers, but not before the Seals were able to test out their advanced weaponry on Aspen, causing her powers to crystallize around her arm. Once on the outside, Aspen recovered from the attack by finding an available water source to replenish her arm's water level.



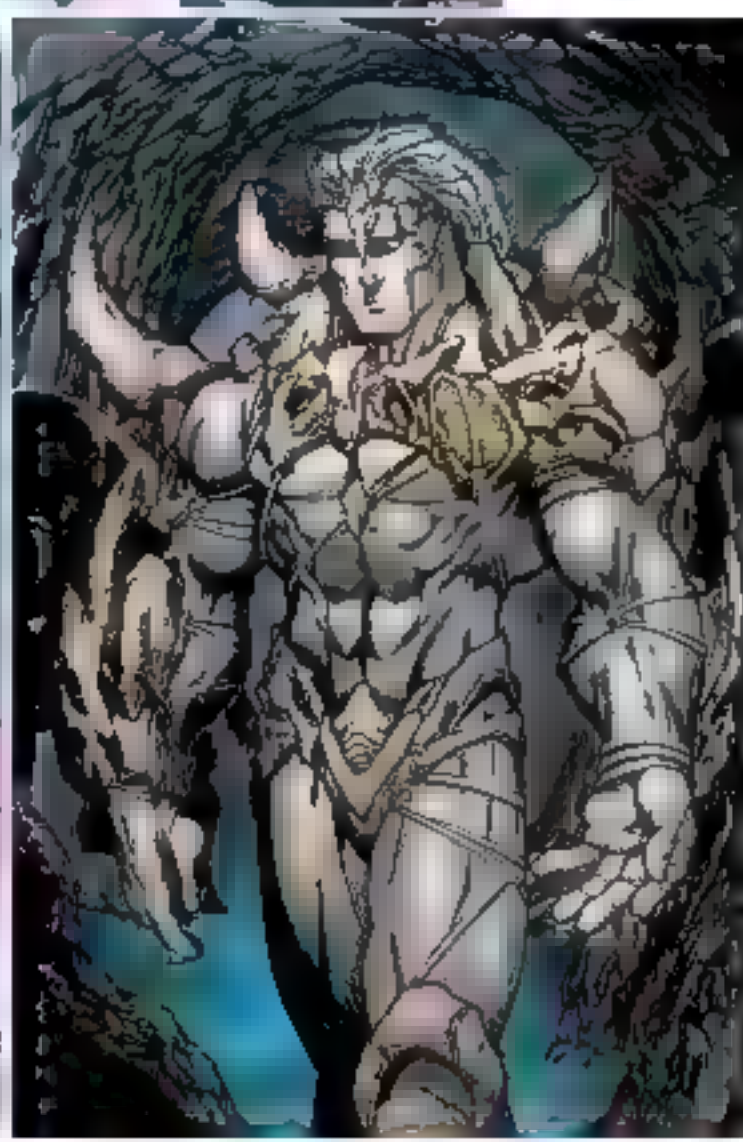
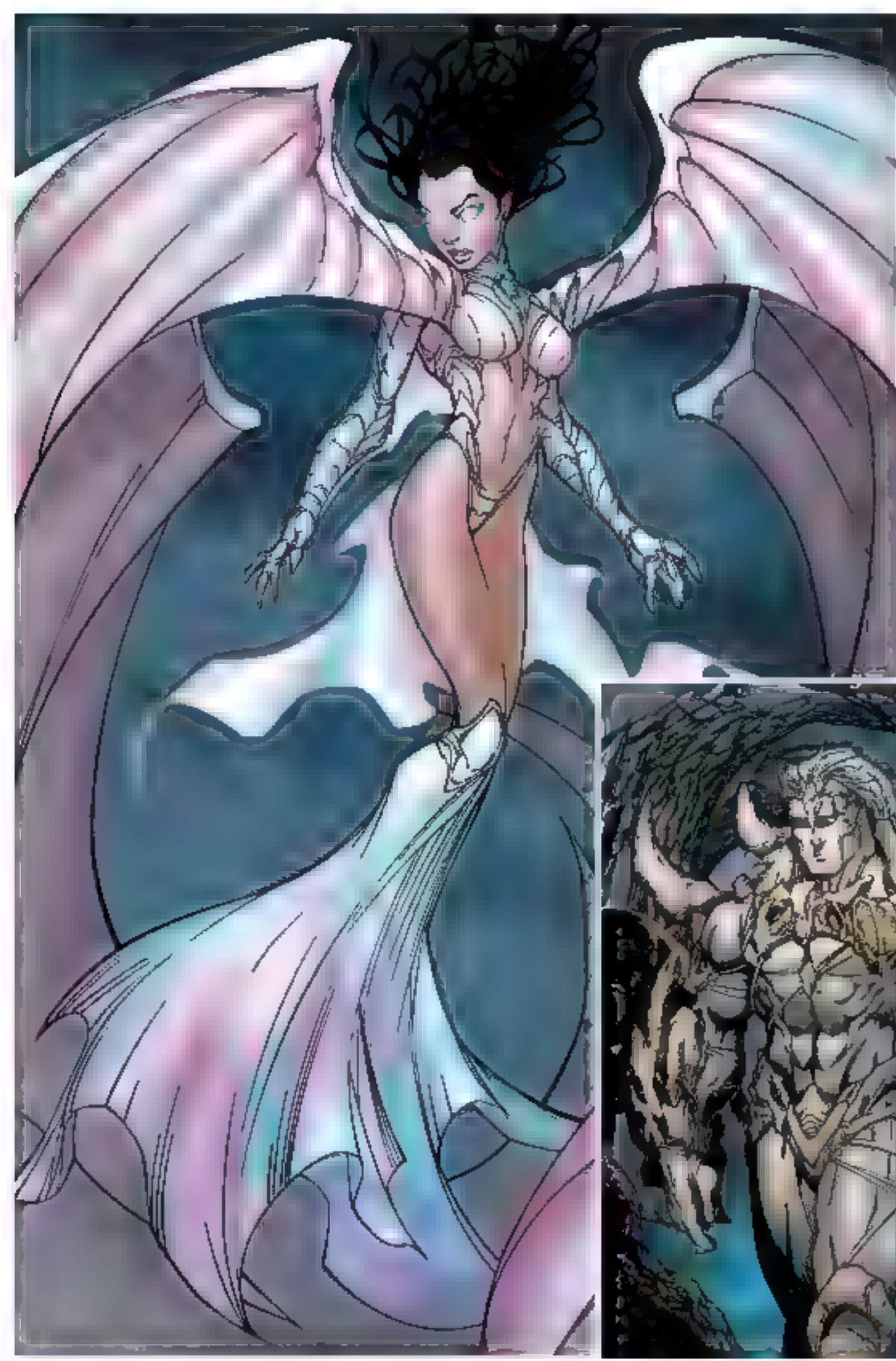
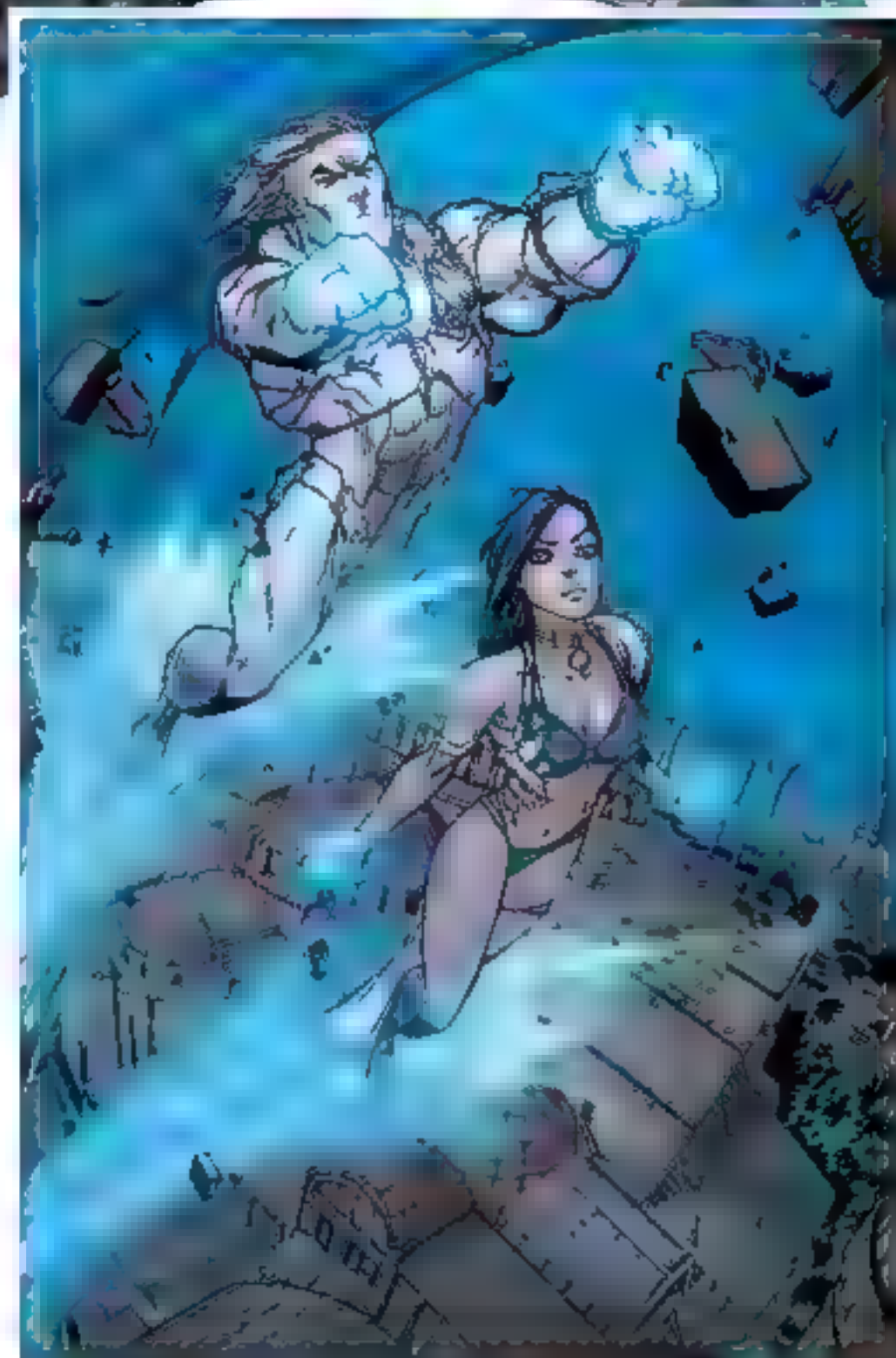
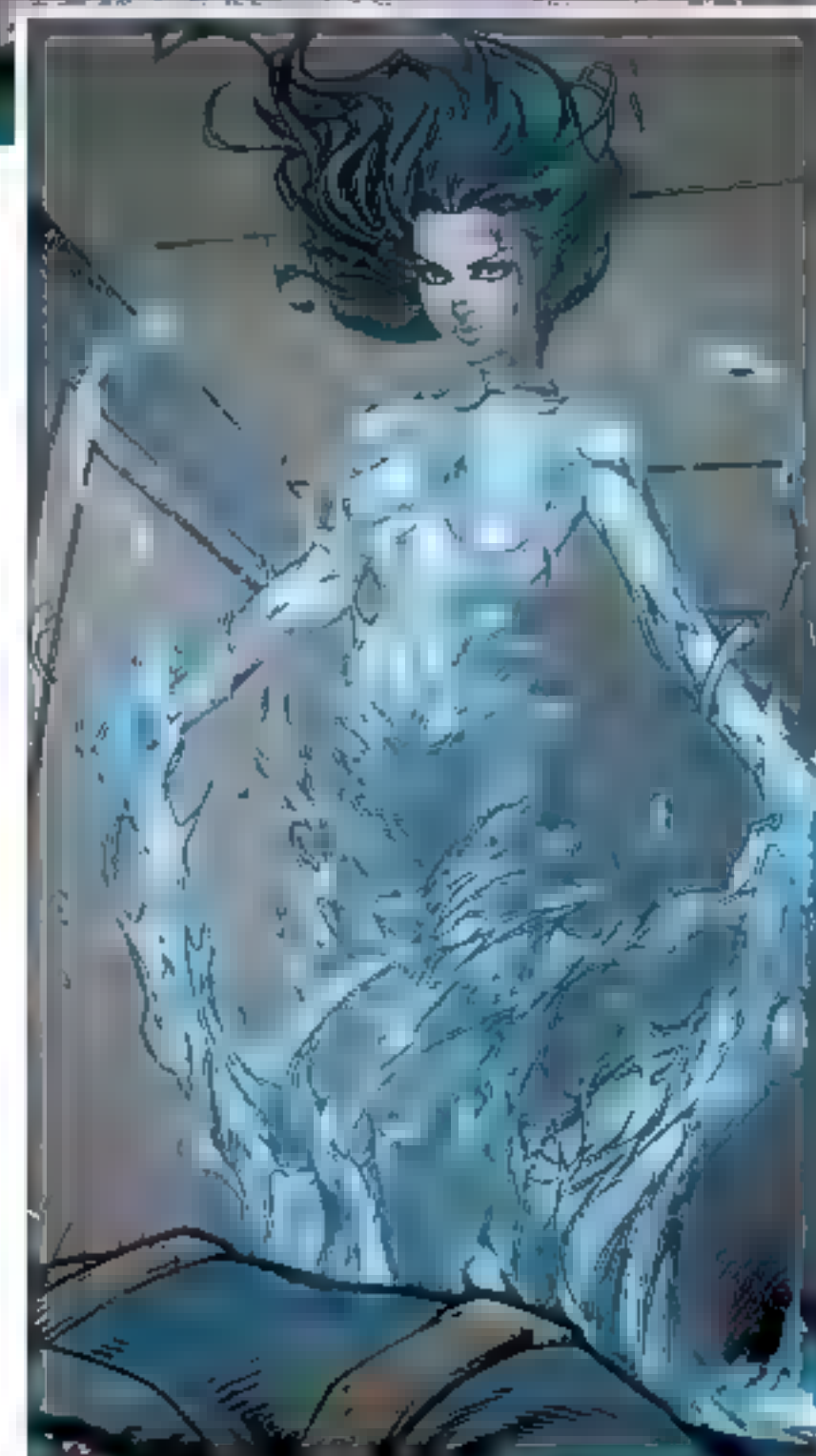
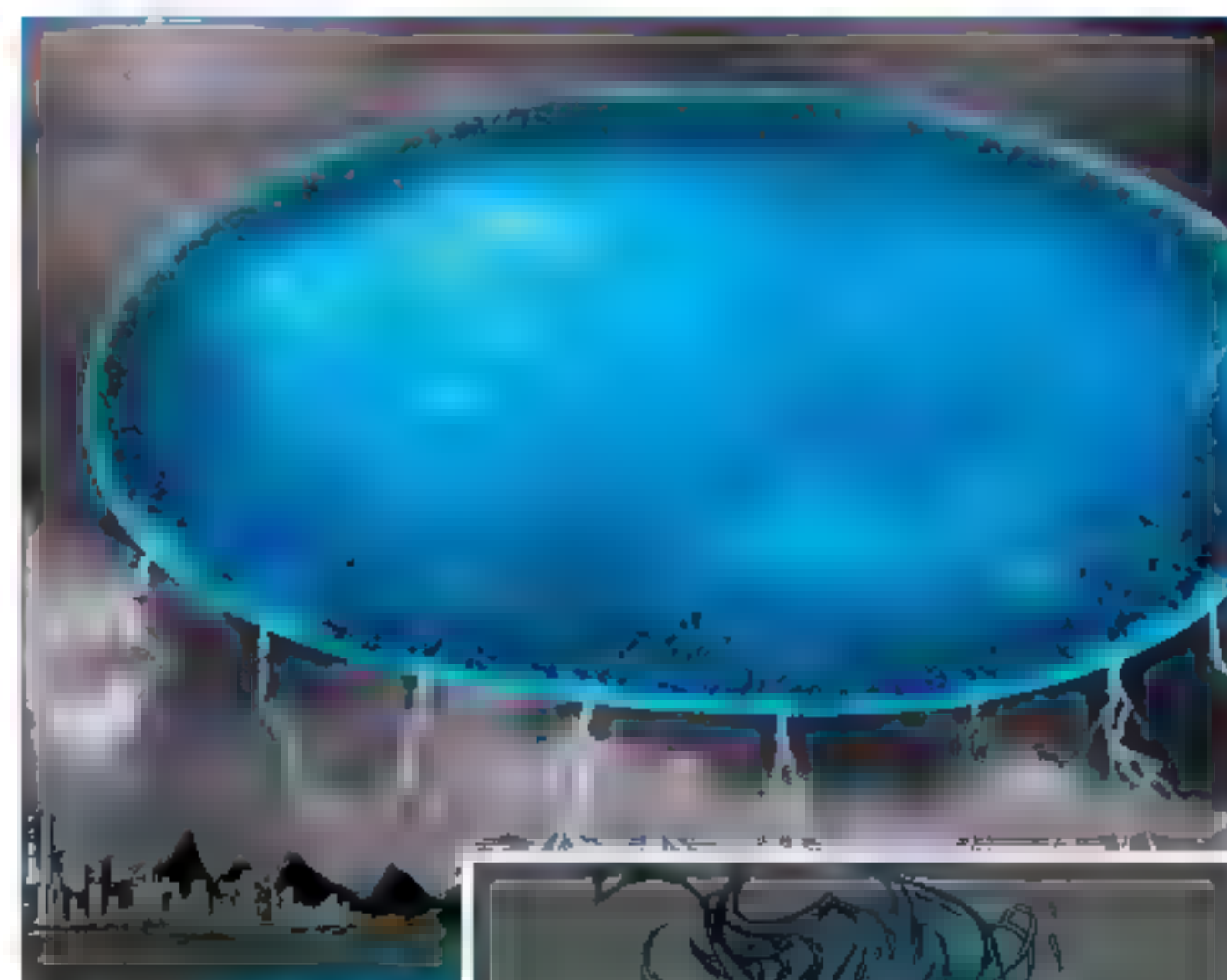
While dealing with the Humans' capture of Finn, the group was unaware of The Black's catastrophic attacks on the surface world in Brazil and off the coast of Florida. Bringing the very water of the ocean itself to rest above heavily populated cities, The Black sought to wipe out the Humans on their own land by bringing down the

force of the seas upon them. While able to destroy the city of Rio De Janeiro, The Black were unable to devastate Miami due to the arrival of Siphon, Cannon and The Blue forces above the surface. Making a historic reveal of their existence to the Human world, Siphon ushered in a new age of Blue-to-Human interaction.

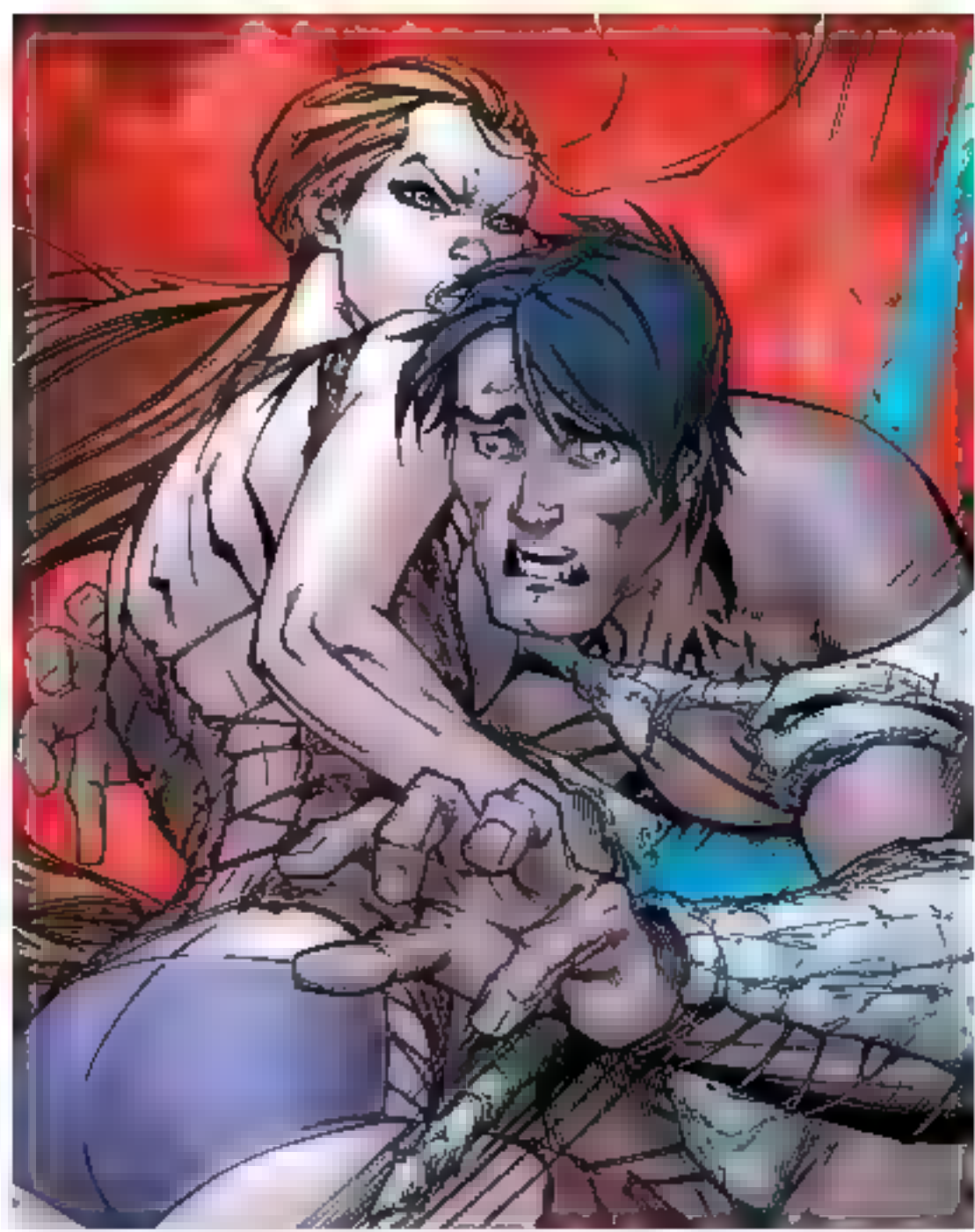
Meanwhile, Aspen, Chance and Finn drove to Los Angeles to head back to the ocean in order to help The Blue in defeating The Black. However, Finn was spotted by a mob of angry Humans, and they were forced to flee into the water off the Santa Monica Pier in dramatic fashion. Using her powers, Aspen formed an immense rising tidal wave to create a distraction for their abrupt

departure. Back in The Blue city of Muria, Aspen was appalled at Siphon's decision to reveal The Blue's existence to the outside world, but their disagreement was interrupted by a message from Killian's wife Anya, asking for a secret meeting. Aspen, Siphon and Cannon agreed to meet Anya in the caverns below Muria, but were caught off guard by Killian's presence there as well. Killian, offering to aid in the cause for better relations with the Humans, is heard by Siphon who agrees to take the matter back to the Elite Council—much to the dismay of Aspen's pleas against it.

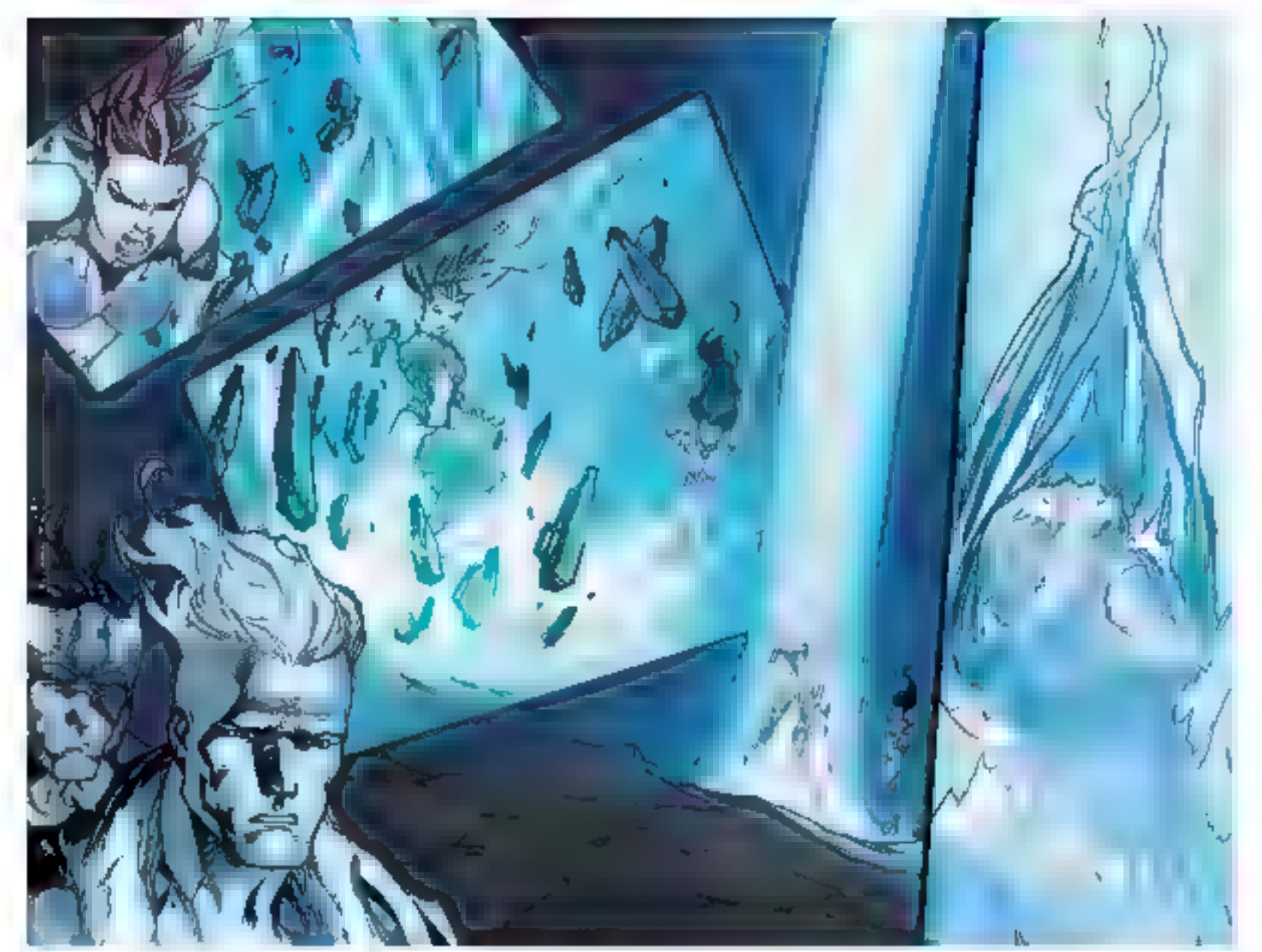
The Elite Council decides to allow Killian to participate in an upcoming World Summit, and the stage was set for a peaceful meeting between The Blue and the Humans world leaders. However, during the summit at the Hagia Sophia in Turkey, the diplomatic solution turned into a nightmare.







The Black, ready to once again cast down their retribution on both the Humans and The Blue, returned to the surface at the Summit. Only this time, Aspen and Killian momentarily put their differences aside to take on the might of The Black. But, one final piece remained to tip the scales back in favor of The Black, the surprise arrival of Kiani, daughter of Killian and leader of the new resistance to the Human way of life. Cannon attempted to stave off Kiani's attack, but in the end, fell victim to her wrath and was killed by her sword. Meanwhile, Aspen and Killian were unable to withstand The Black's initial



assault, and a familiar member of The Black, Casque, took out Killian. While this occurred, Aspen and her father Rahger, leader of The Black, fought high above the ocean for control of the races of man and The Blue. Ultimately, in a stunning display of enablement, Aspen manifested together the immense powers of both her Blue and Black bloodline, and forced a defeated Rahger and The Black to return to the depths of the ocean.

One last obstacle stood in Aspen's way to peace between her two worlds—Kiani. After discovering that Kiani had murdered Cannon, her dear friend and ally, Aspen surged with anger towards Kiani. The pair finally fought one another in an epic battle of wills, but Kiani was not powerful enough to defeat a surging Aspen. The daughter of two worlds sent Kiani crashing into the ocean floor, soundly defeating her. With peace restored momentarily, a new era of Blue and Human contact was ushered in. Aspen, wary from her epic journey up to this point, decides to break free from both worlds and sets out on a path of self-discovery.

Michael Turner's Fathom v3 TPB in stores NOW!

## FATHOM Volume 4 — “The Rig”

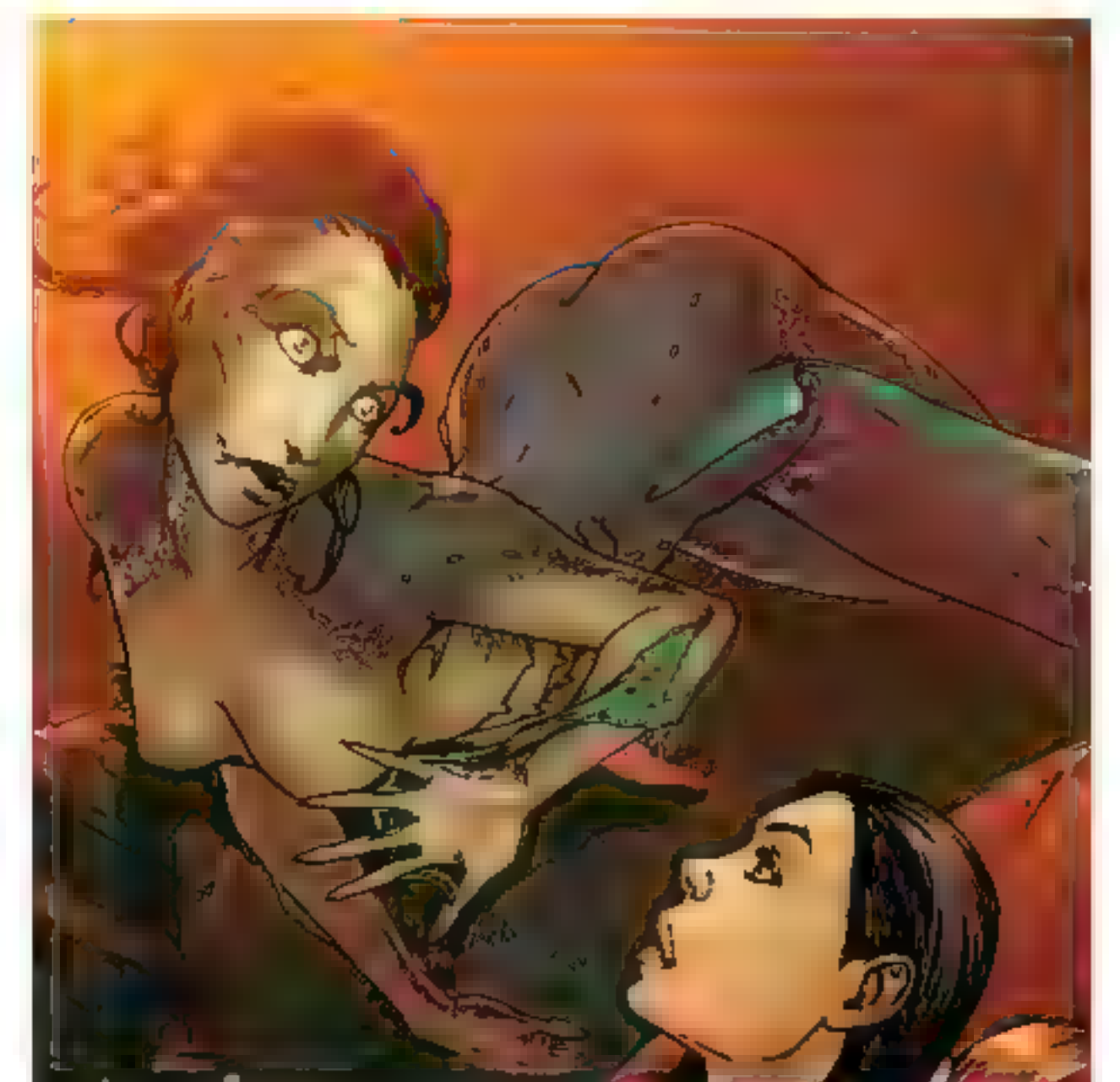
Aspen found herself aboard another oceanic research facility, The Wave, along with her new friends Judith Banyaski and Dr. Collin Woreth. However, the trio discovered a violent parasitic entity that could infect and possess its human victims. Aspen was able to contain the threat but was horrified to learn it took control of the first person she ever killed.

Later, the group was in Saudi Arabia in the convoy of a wealthy sheik and his vast resources. They journeyed to a secret ocean buried beneath an oil rig and magma core, and were shocked to discover a woman, Padma Singh, transformed by a series of bioengineering tests into a hybrid form of Human and The Blue. Before Aspen was able to investigate further, a team of special ops soldiers attacked the group and took out Aspen.

Awakening in a strange underwater church, Aspen soon

encountered Mr. Nakamura, a marine biologist hell-bent on revenge for the explosion at the DMD that killed his fellow colleague, and lover. Aspen also discovered she was in the middle of a civil war between the oil rig and the church worshippers, with her friends Collin and Judith held hostage.

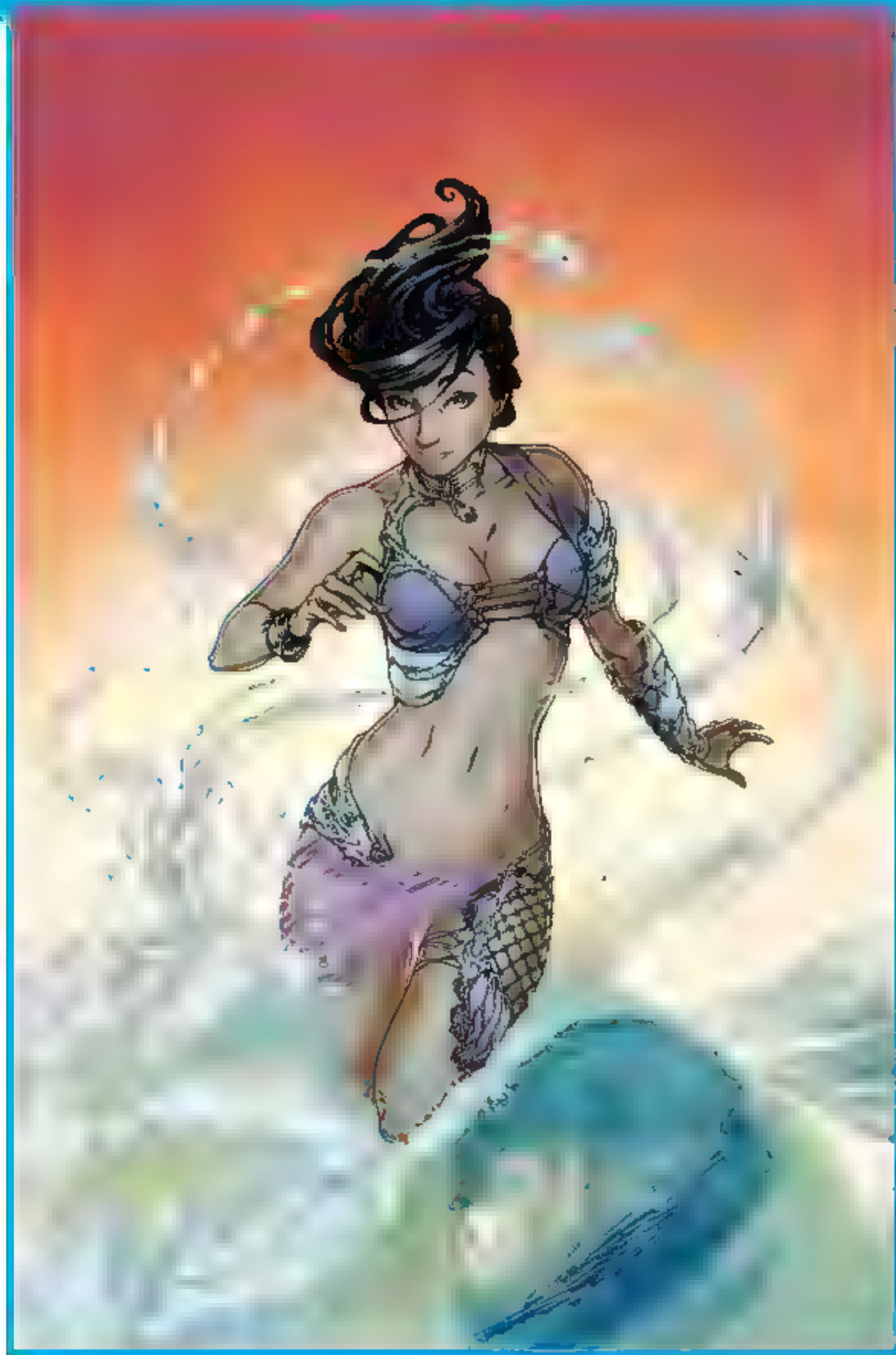
Aspen successfully rescued Collin, but not before Mr. Nakamura turned Judith into a vessel of immense water energy intent on killing Aspen. However, Judith was unable to harness the sheer level of power running through her body, as Aspen absorbed it using her Elite Blue-level strength to defeat her. Judith returned to her human form. Following these events, Aspen questioned her role above the surface, as unaware to her, an iceberg began rising in the ocean water nearby.



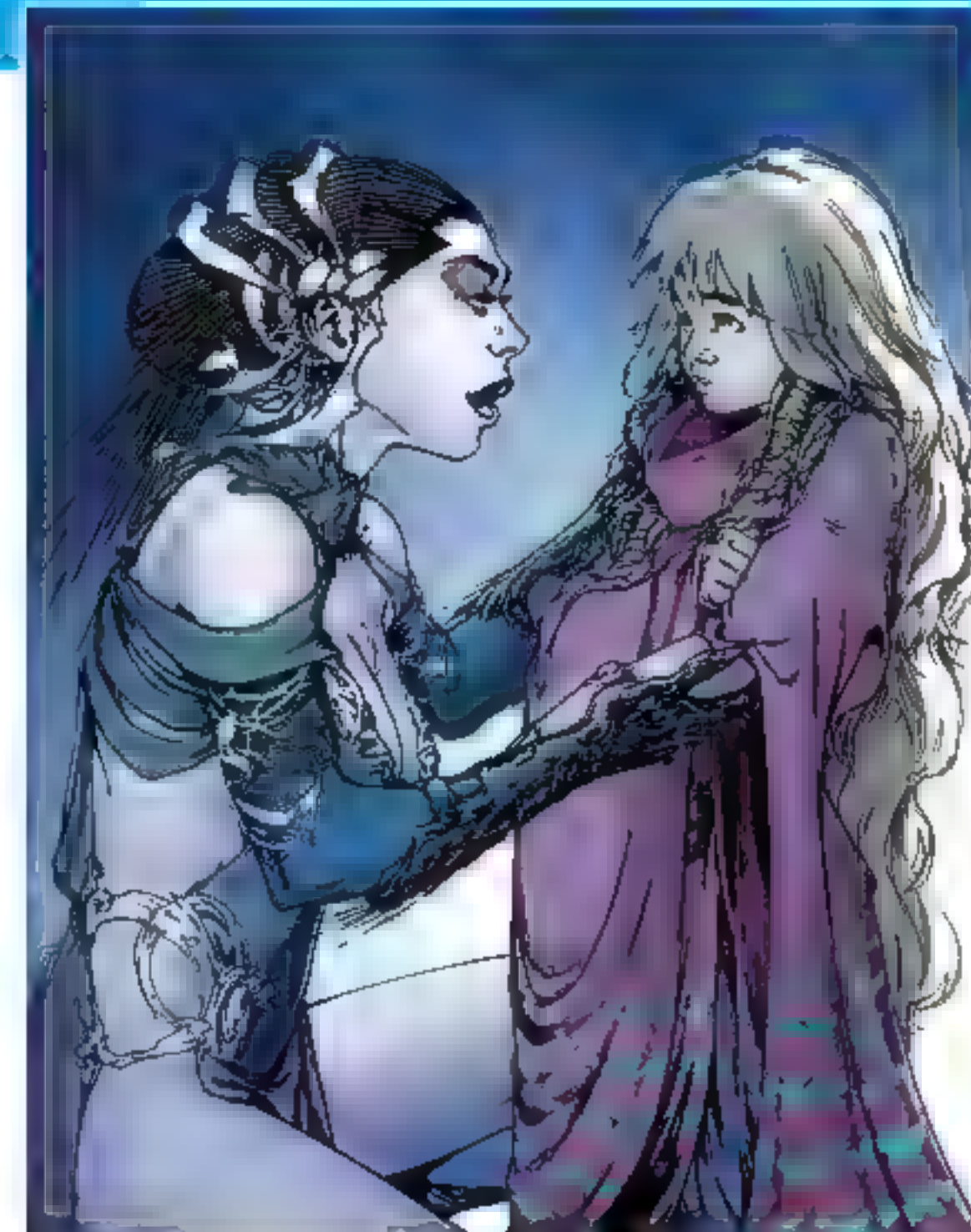
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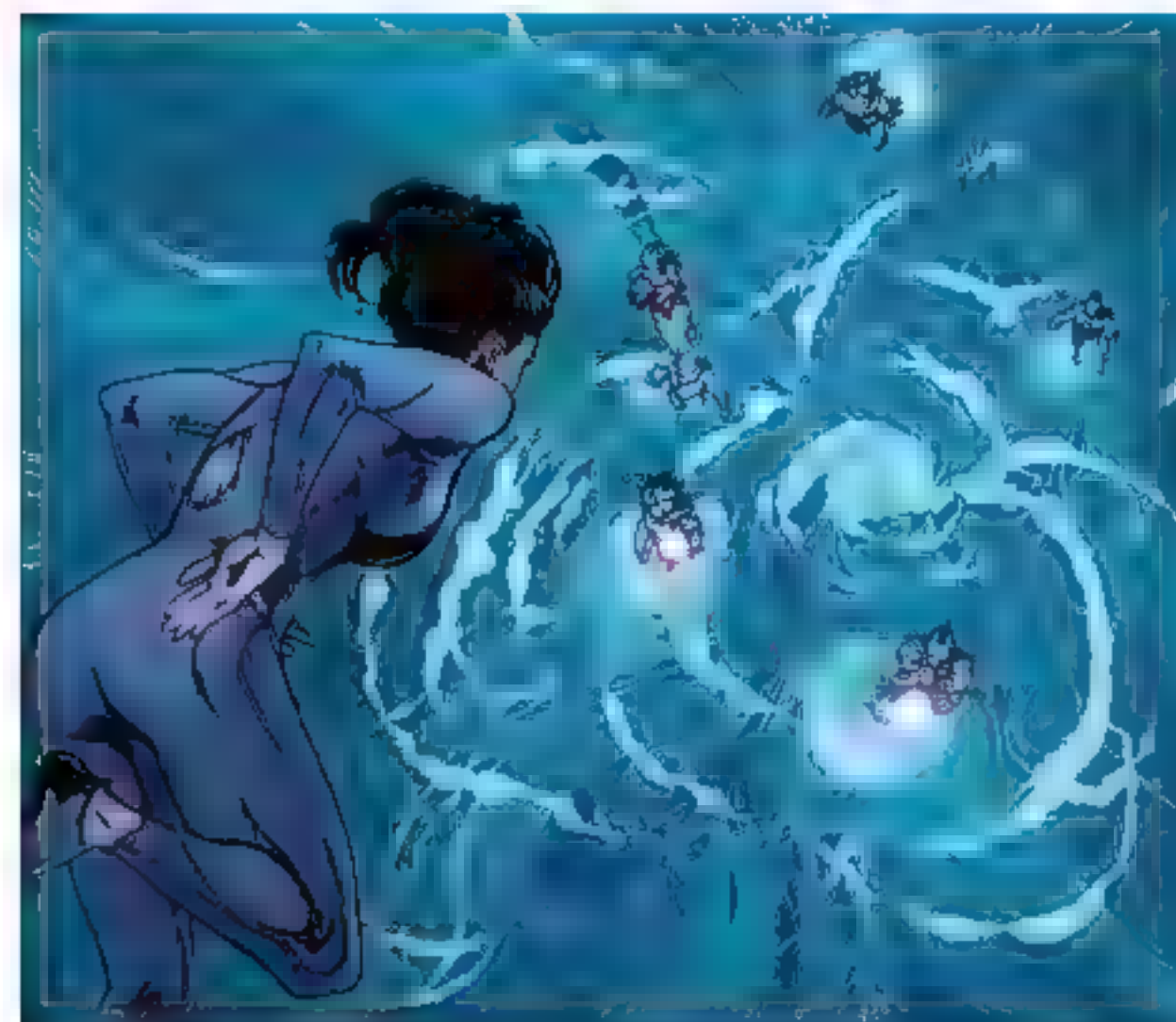
# FATHOM Volume 5 — “Cold Destiny”



An ecological disaster in the Sea of Cortez off the coast of Mazatlan led to huge volumes of crude oil pouring into the ocean. The Coast Guard called in Aspen and she used her powers to stop the flow. Aspen collected all of the oily water and floated it above the ocean surface in a neat package for disposal. Using a giant wave, she placed herself in view of Raymundoil representatives being interviewed by the media, demanding answers. She pressured the executive to make a commitment to environmental protection.



Aspen returned to San Diego, where she'd set up house with Judith as a roommate, also hiring her as an assistant. Aspen ignored an offer from the Russian government before jetting off to examine a huge ring of ice in the ocean off the coast of Belize. She found a settlement of hostile Atlantic Blue there, but they escaped after a brief battle. Aspen rushed to Muria to alert the council and hoped to extricate herself from the issue shortly thereafter, but it was discovered that a Blue settlement called Andoria had been destroyed by ice—the calling card of the Atlantic Blue.



Aspen was asked to join the pardoned Killian, now Commander of Council Security, on a trip to investigate the assault on Andoria. Along the way, Atlantic Blue attacked their expedition. Killian easily dispatched the hit team, returning his group safely to Muria. Aspen left them to their investigation and returned to her life in San Diego.

Unfortunately, ice walls were appearing all around the world, causing devastation to ocean fauna. Aspen decided to visit a Human/Blue Relations center up the coast in Santa Monica that had been trying to woo her as an employee. Feeling the center was not going to be helpful with the crisis of ice walls, Aspen was ready to leave when Chance Calloway appeared, wearing a badge, seemingly embedded in the workings there.



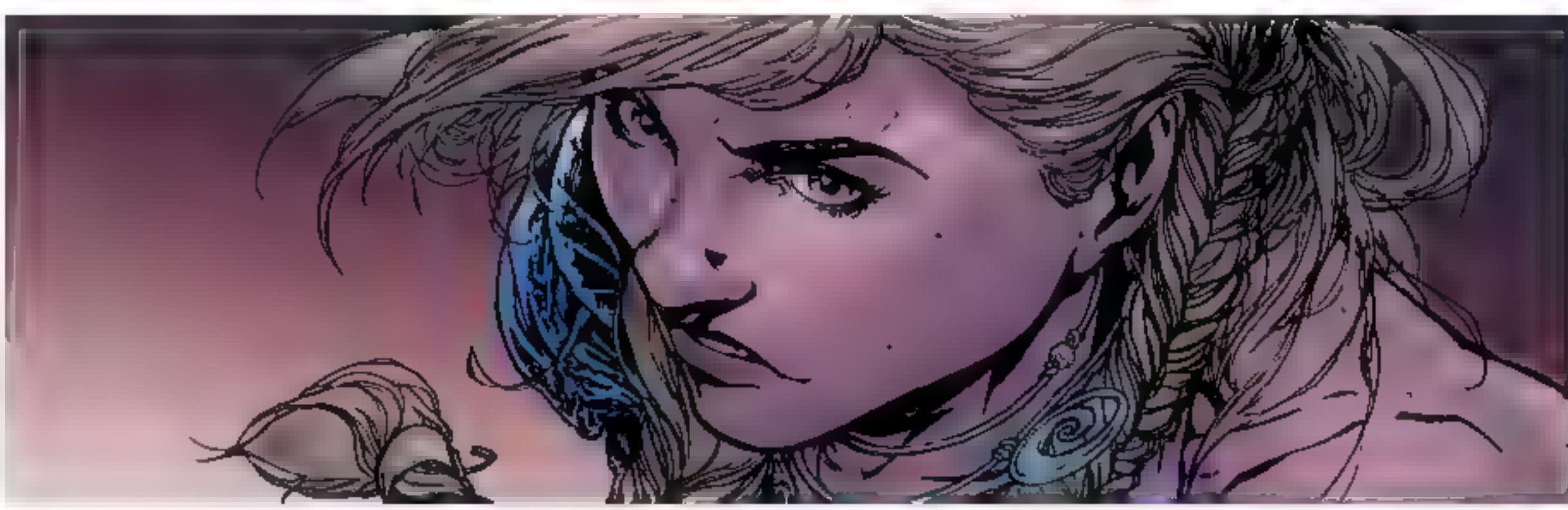
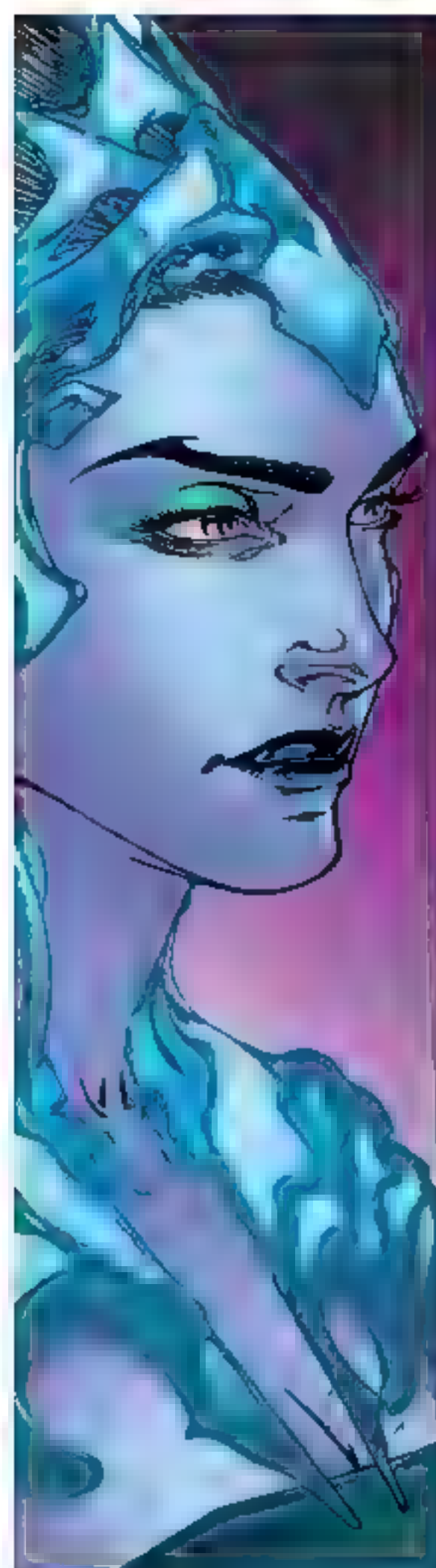
Chance joined Aspen and Judith for a snack on the Santa Monica Pier, discussing his run-in with a wall of ice in the Grand Canyon. Suddenly, Aspen saved an old man in an out-of-control car, which led to the trio being swarmed by people and paparazzi. The Russian operative Fyodor Luzhin had been following Aspen and rescued her, Chance, and Judith before they were trampled. Luzhin said that his research platform could help them discover the answers to the Atlantic Blue offensive, so Aspen and Chance followed Luzhin to Russia.



Luzhin showed her new amphibious armor that could, alongside Russia's submarine fleet, destroy the ice that was lowering the planet's temperature beyond ranges safe for human habitation. Luzhin wanted Aspen to be the power source for these weapons, which she refused. This led to a gunfire-fueled dispute with guards, from which Aspen and Chance escaped aboard an experimental Russian amphibious warplane. Aspen asked Chance to head towards the Arctic Circle.

Aspen and Chance arrived at the outskirts of Vana's rebuilt castle. Aspen knocked out two guards and secured a Blue pistol for Chance. The pair snuck in to discover Killian just as he managed to thaw himself out from Vana's powers. They took out more guards on their way to confront Vana at the Arctic hydroport. With Killian's help, Vana was defeated and the now-trio could return to Muria and stop Vana's invasion.

When they arrived, the Blue capital was a frozen wreck. Aspen followed Killian in, only to be knocked back by an attack from Killian and Anya's artificially aged daughter Anika, now Vana's "Princess Kania." Anika's powers surprised Aspen, but Chance distracted the child with a shot from his pistol. Aspen

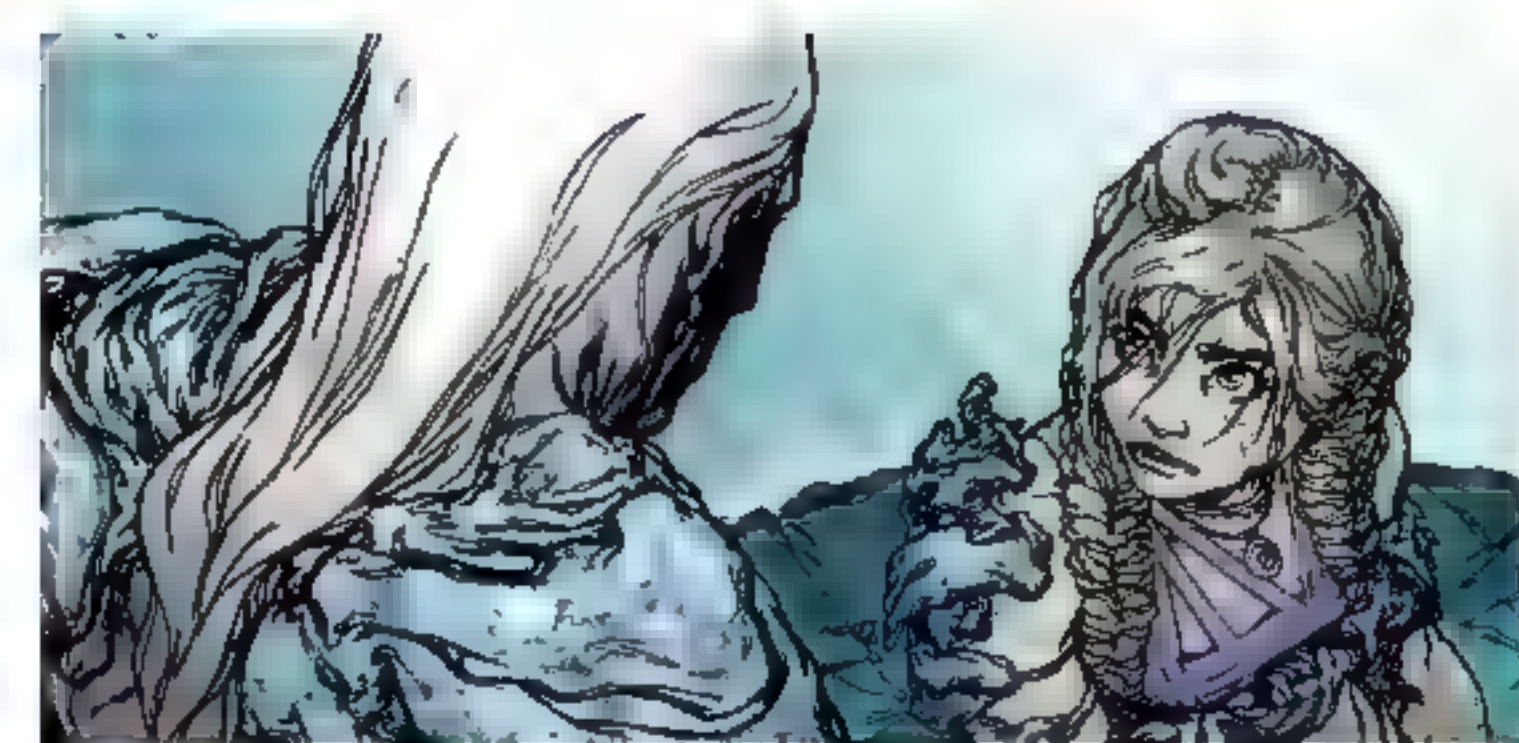




pummeled Anika with hardened water, then took out Anika's guards. Anika recovered and attacked the more vulnerable Chance, who almost died before Aspen was able to again knock the breath from Anika and save him.



Aspen was ready to take Anika out of the fight when Killian blasted her aside and explained that he was in fact Anika's father. He swore to Anya as she died to protect the child, but his anger was so great all he could do was exile her. Aspen and Chance were told they could leave as Killian swam off in anger.

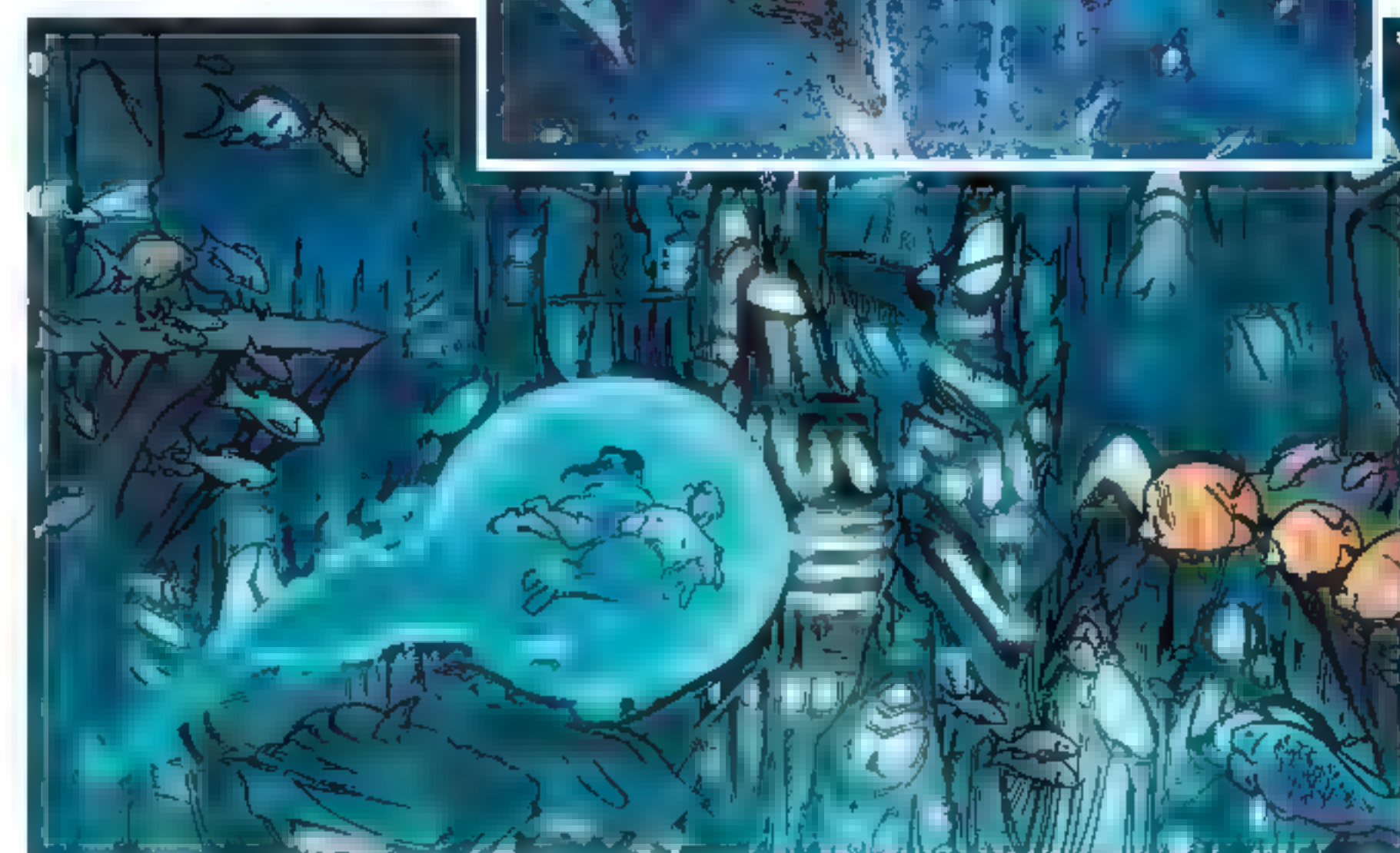
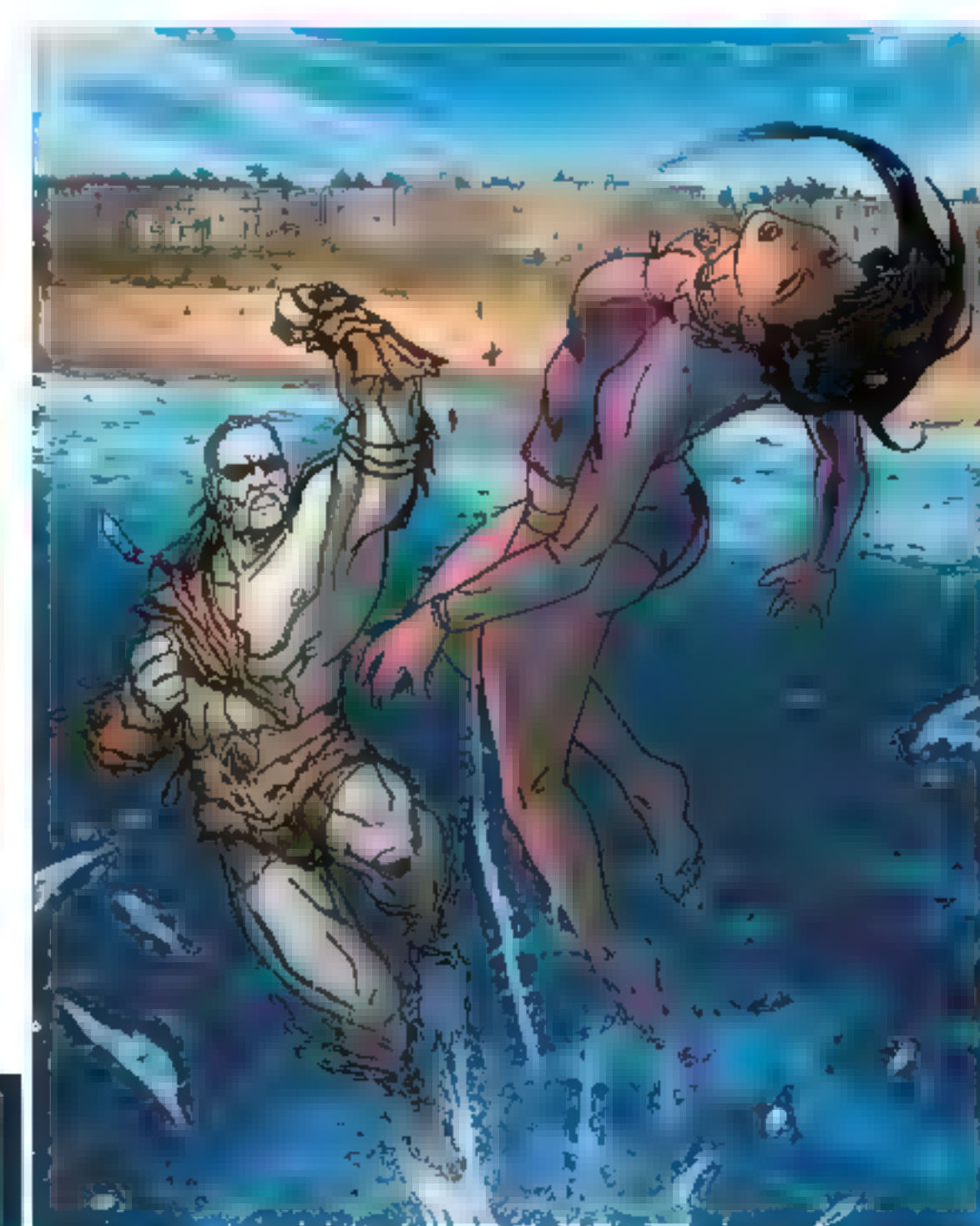


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## FATHOM Volume 6 — "Typhos Awaken"

A new species of The Blue rose from beneath the surface in San Diego, battling Aspen Matthews northward up the North American coast into glacial terrain. Aspen managed to freeze this warrior in place before any further damage could be done, but this new breed of fighter poisoned himself before Aspen could find out the truth of his arrival.

Relaying the events to her friend Tyler, Aspen discovered that her exploits ended up on the news and social media, leading to a frenzy of reports and speculation. Researching their kind in an artifact book given to her by a long-lost ally, Aspen deciphered that the "Typhos" of The Blue had risen in revenge for alleged slights, and the weapon she recovered from him suddenly evolved into a cloaking device that produced a Blue outfit around her.



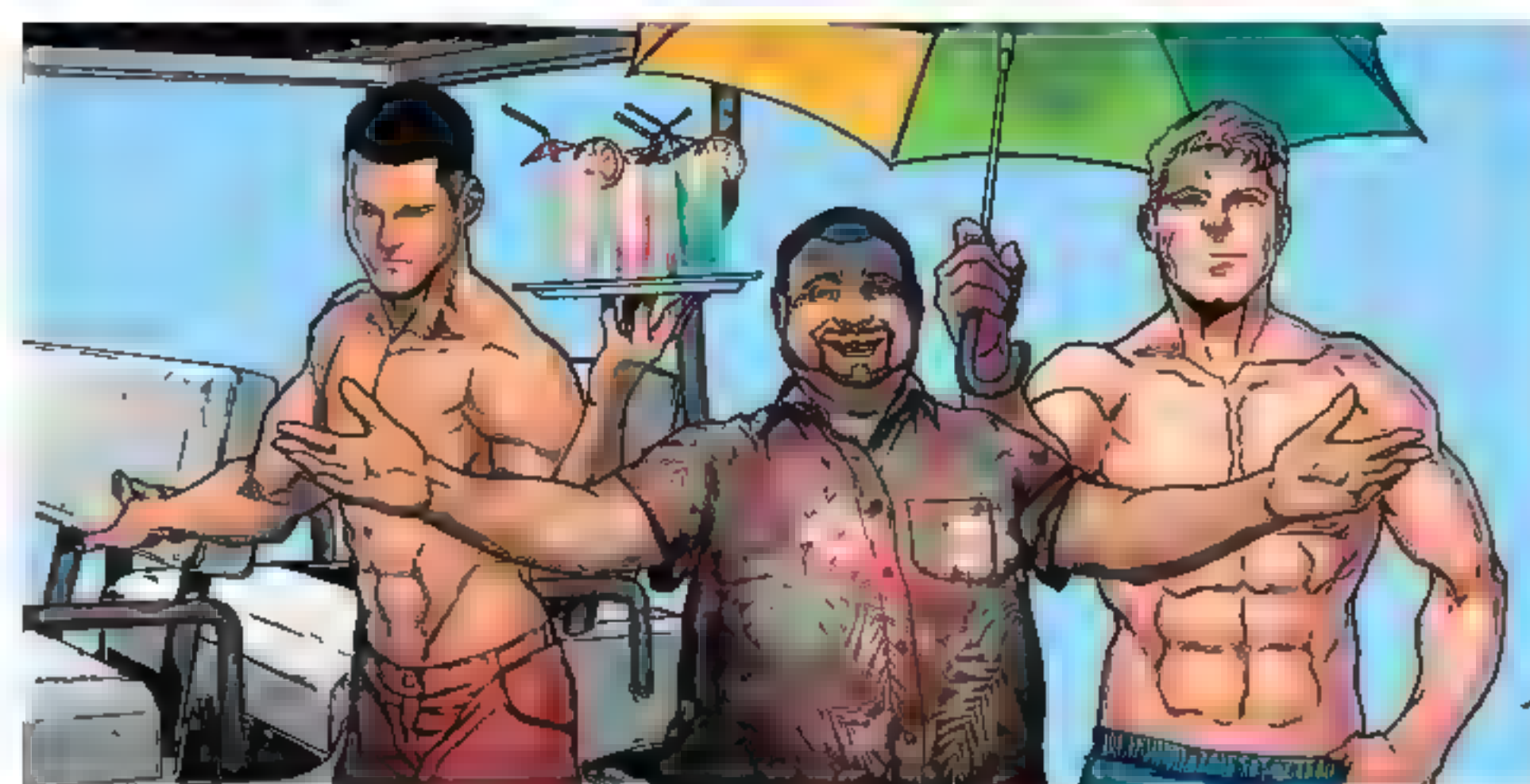
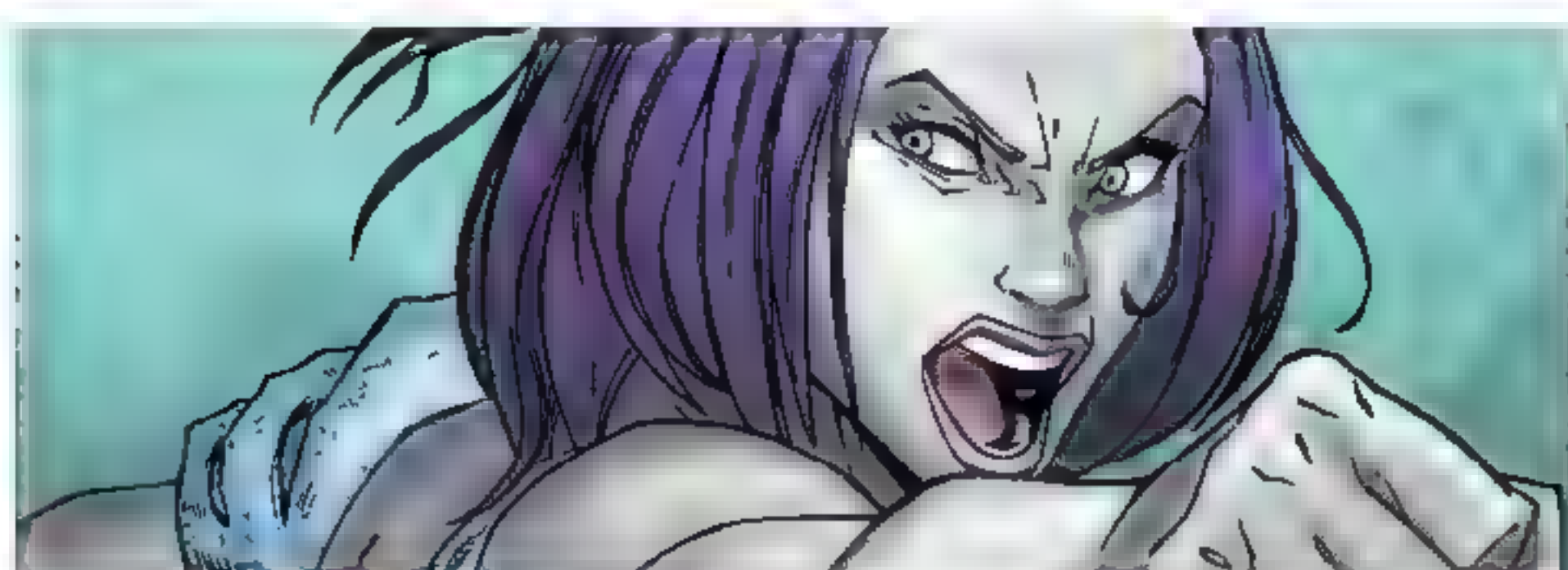
Under the surface in The Blue capitol, Siphon urged patience as his fellow Elite Council member Virydis openly contradicted Aspen's account of the fight. Meanwhile, in a hidden Typhos outpost, the formerly deceased Cannon Hawke reappeared alive and well, and in control of the Typhos army, pledging to bring the battle to Aspen.

Manipulating the help of a rich billionaire, Riley J. Moss, Cannon was able to stage an uprising on cities across the globe by convincing the Elite Council they needed to allow him and Aspen to trigger a failsafe to halt the spread of more deadly Typhos. Yet, this was all a ploy to frame Moss for

the release of The Typhos while assuming control of the Elite Council with visions of Aspen by his side.

Aspen quickly rebuffed Cannon's advances, triggering his anger that resulted in combat between the two for control of The Blue. During combat, Aspen removed Cannon's cloaking device and promptly revealed him to be Virydis, the Elite Council member. Aspen

defeated her in battle and Virydis was placed in a cryo-chamber prison of The Blue. Aspen Matthews returned to her life with Chance, Tyler and Matilda—still in the public eye of social media.



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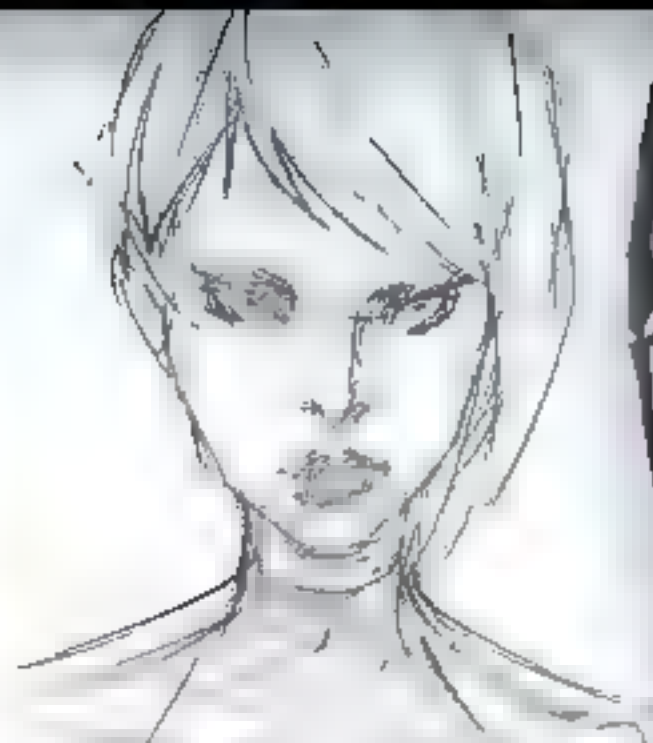
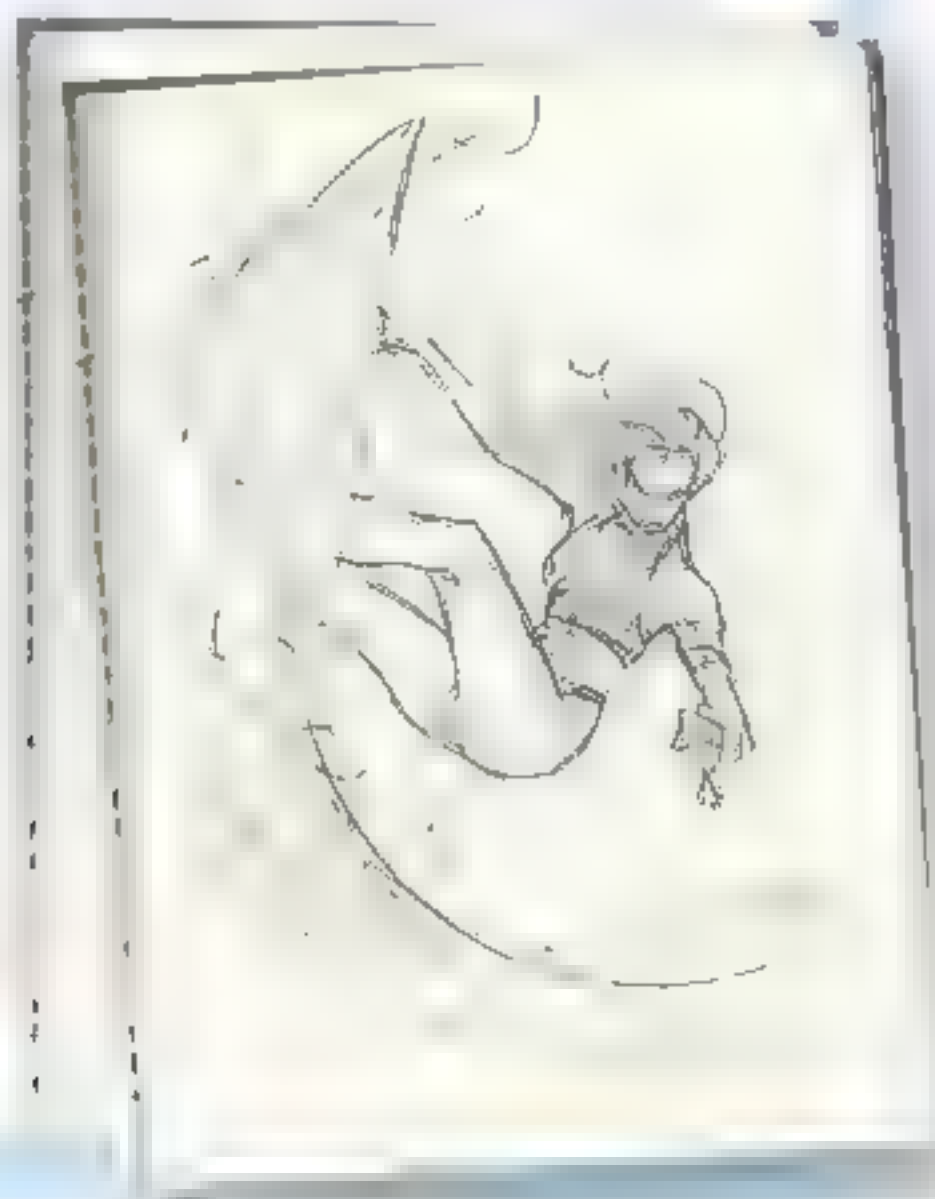
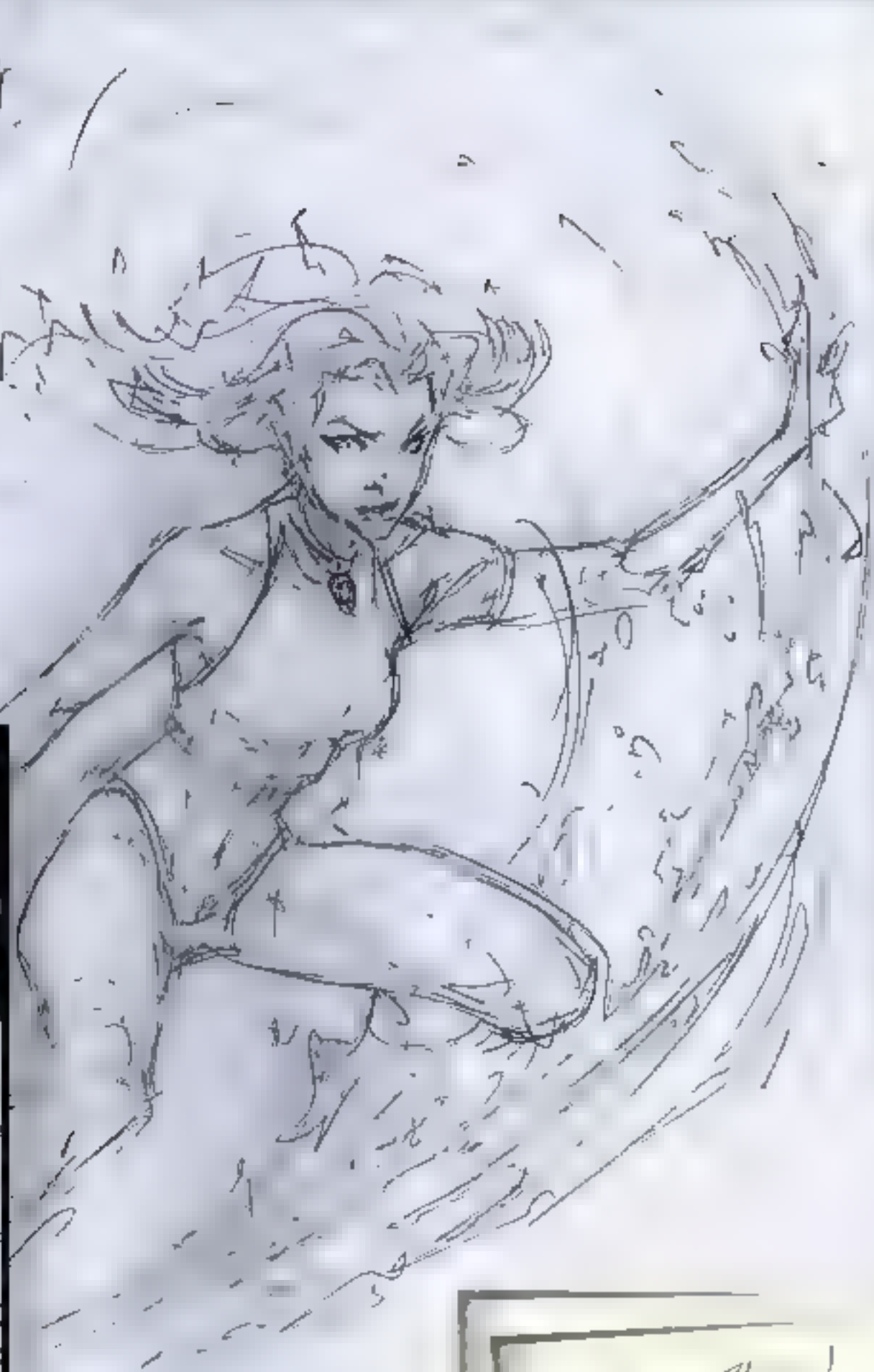
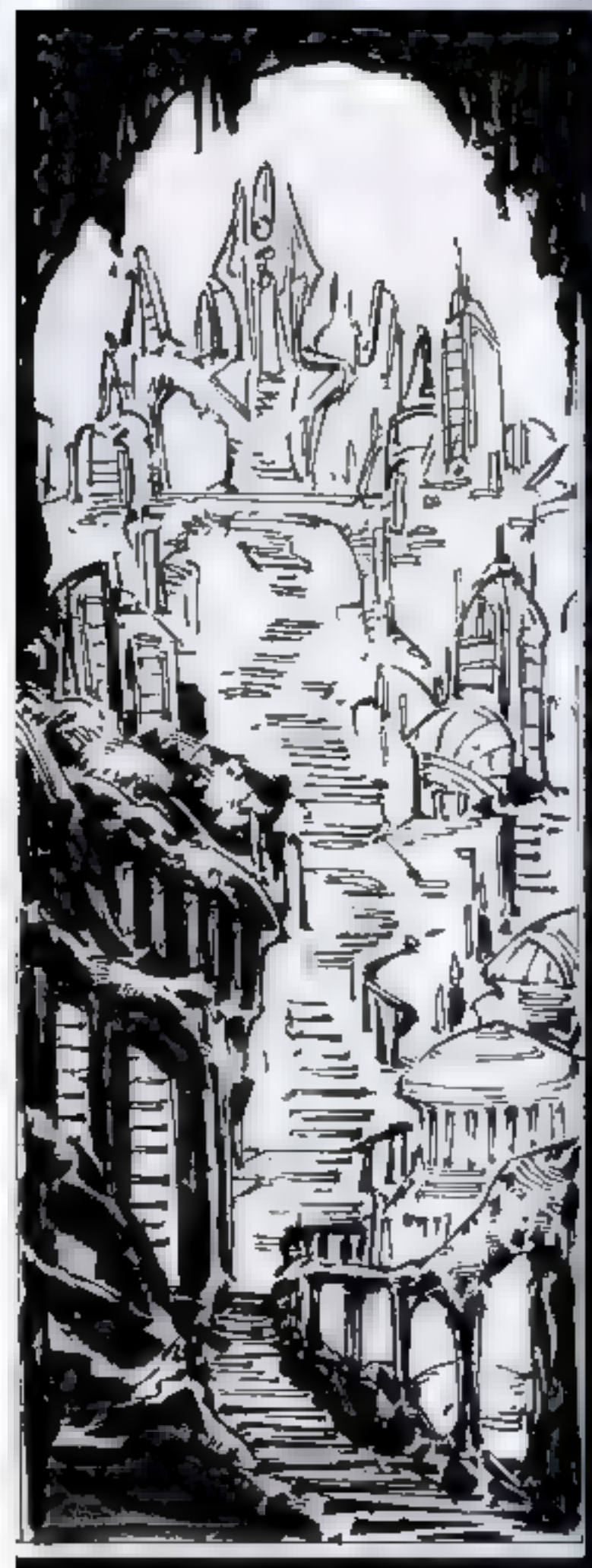
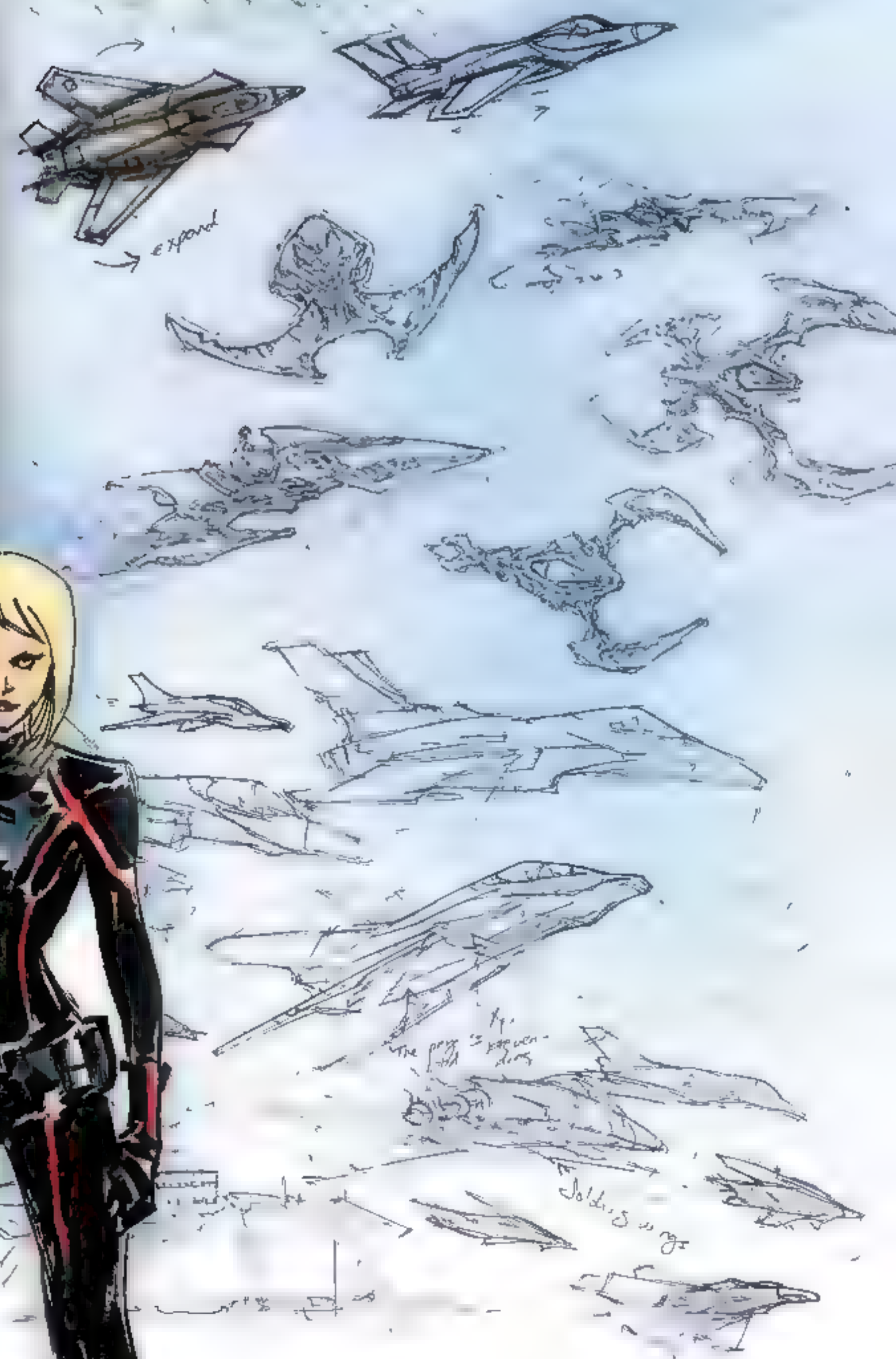
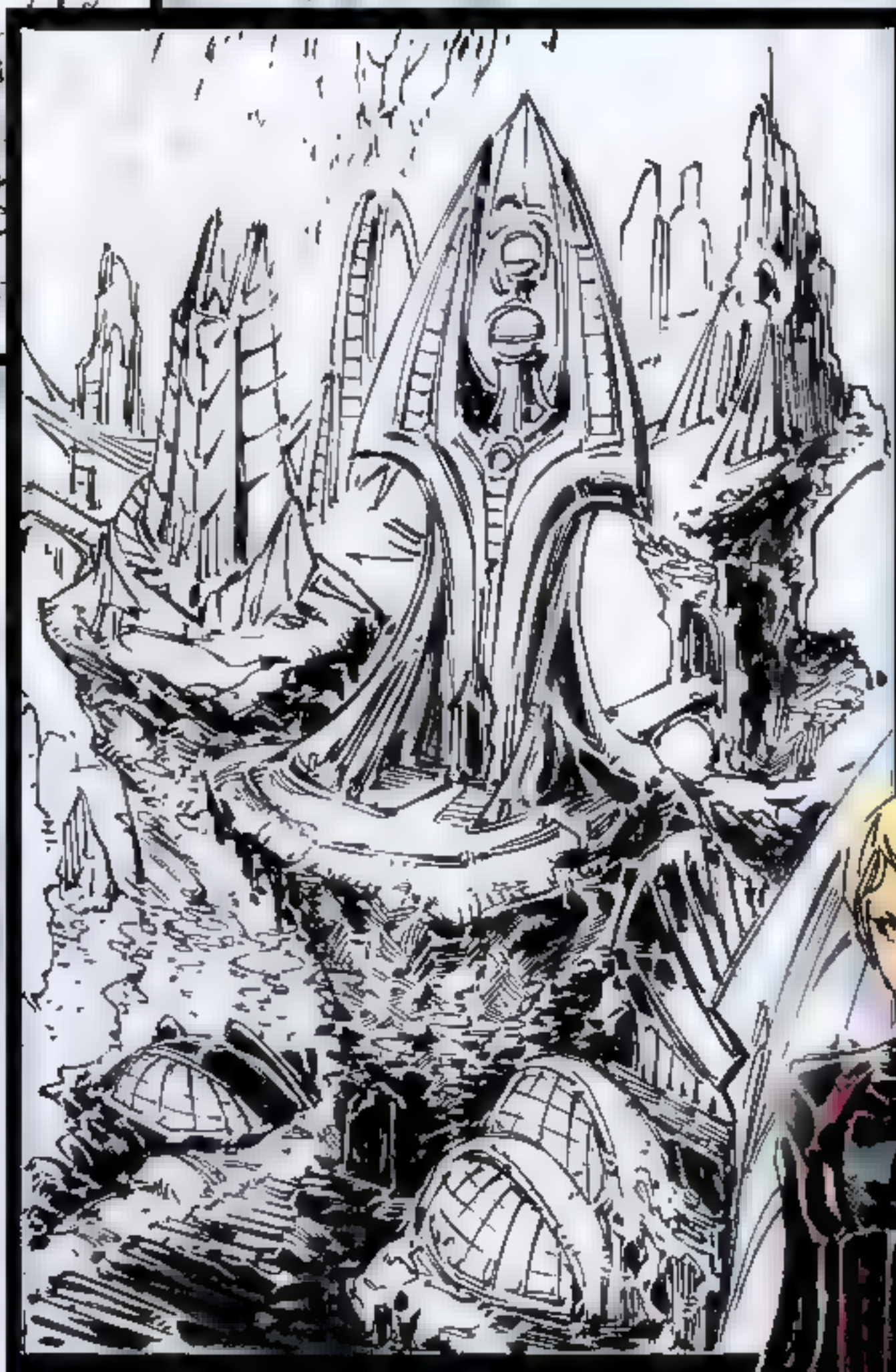
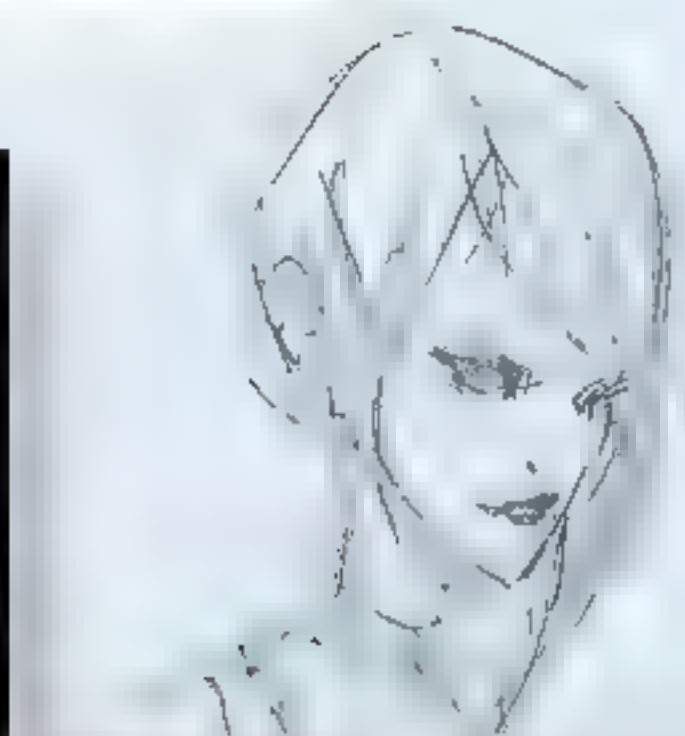
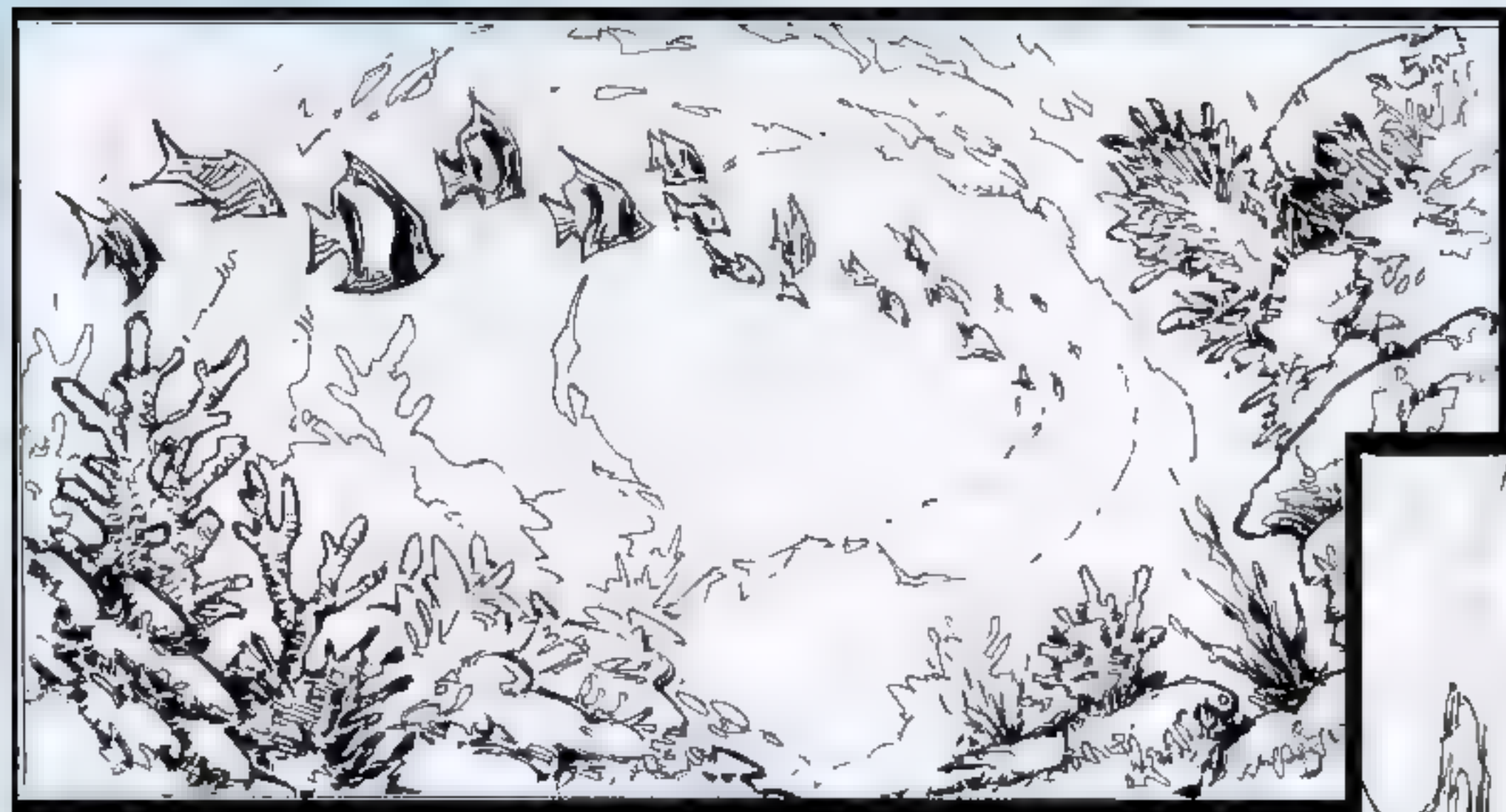


# MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM™

## CREATION of an EPIC

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# MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM #1

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THE FATE OF  
TWO CIVILIZATIONS  
RESTS IN  
HER HANDS...

...AND HUMANITY  
MAY SUFFER  
THE CONSEQUENCES!

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PREVIEW





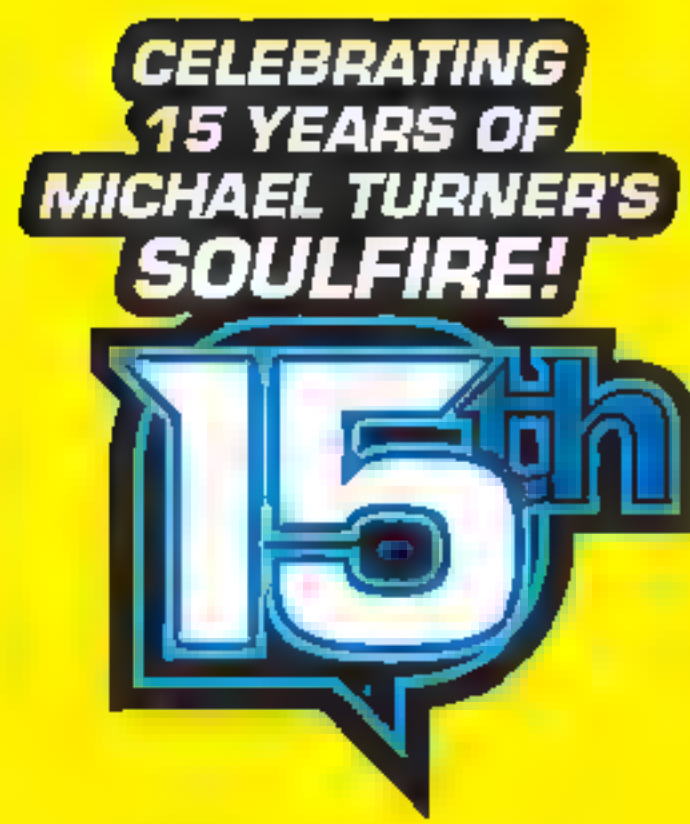


Direct Edition  
by - **MICHAEL TURNER**  
& - **PETER STEIGERWALD**

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

In 2003, to mark the launch of his own publishing studio, Aspen Comics, Michael Turner put pencil to paper and went about creating a whole new world—a source of light in a strong female warrior, a source of dark in a monstrous mechanical dragon, and a source of power in the form of a seemingly ordinary boy who is anything but. Quickly joining the mega-hit Fathom, Soulfire has become one of Aspen's flagship properties, still going strong fifteen years later.

In the future, the world is dominated by technology, and an ancient power is on the verge of making a big comeback. The magic inherent in the universe has been dormant for centuries, but all that may change if a special spirit, a unique soul in the form of a boy named Malikai, can fulfill his destiny as the spark to bring about the next great age of magic!



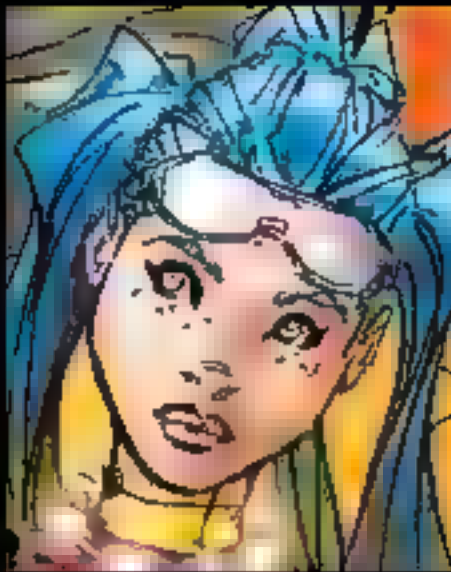
## SOULFIRE THE MAJOR PLAYERS:

### Malikai



On the surface, Malikai is simply a teenage orphan trying to find his way through the complex and challenging future landscape in the world of Soulfire. But, he's so much more. Malikai is in fact the latest incarnation of the Samusara, that special soul that will be the catalyst to spark the next great age of magic. Along with his best friends, Sonia and PJ, Malikai embarked on an epic quest of self-discovery, and along with the aid of Grace and the other "masters," fulfilled that destiny. Although he'd like nothing more than to go back to the simpler life he used to know, his central role in the sphere of magic throughout the universe is constantly pulling him into conflicts, both great and small, as the world struggles to adapt to the return of magic.

### Sonia



Sonia is perhaps the closest person to Malikai in his life. They met as teens living on the streets of San Francisco, and their relationship eventually evolved into a full-on romance. She is something of a free spirit, filled with spunk and personality, but she has suffered great emotional stress watching Malikai face the challenges standing in the way of his destiny.

### PJ



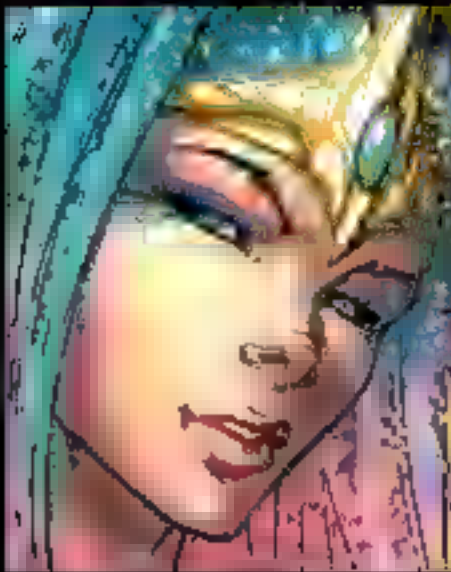
Malikai's best friend, PJ rounds out the trifecta of their bond. He first met Malikai when they were both housed in an orphanage, and they have been at each other's side ever since. He's something of a gear-head and loves tinkering in the realms of engineering and cybernetic technology. An interest that has led to a close friendship with Benoist, who he views as a mentor figure. PJ is fun-loving, easy-going, and lives for adventure.

### The Dragons



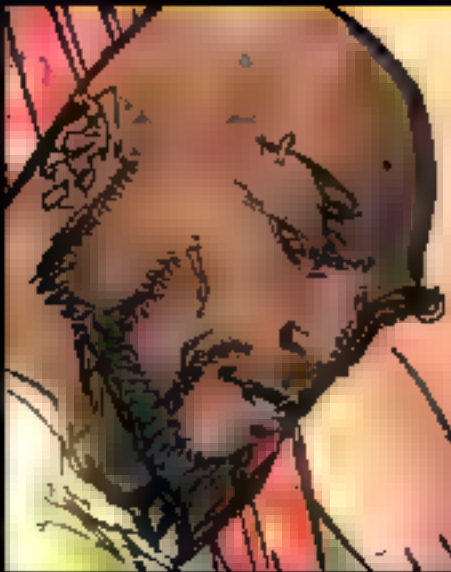
The dragons exist as the purest form of magic in the universe. Born from its very energy, these majestic beasts thrive during the ages of magic, soaring in the skies above, but lay dormant in the darker ages when the light of magic has all but faded. They care nothing for the petty battles being waged by the lesser creatures of the world. They simply exist, like forces of nature.

### Grace



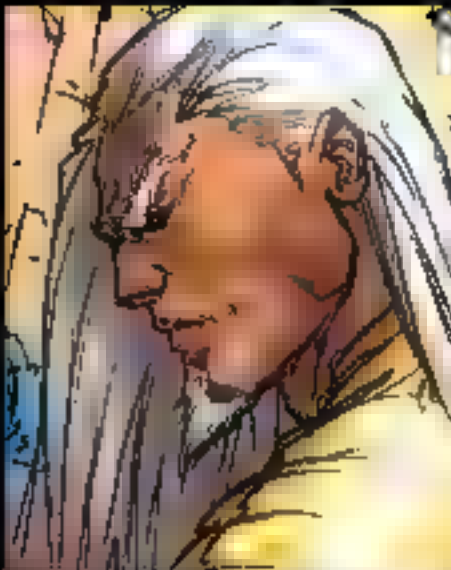
Grace is a member of the Rahtumi, one of the main ancient races that all but disappeared when the last great age of magic ended. She is a warrior, who has been clashing with the sinister Rainier over the centuries in an effort to help save magic. She carries with her a solemn duty to help bring about its return by mentoring the Samusara, the unique soul destined for this task. She is a defender of all things magic and holds a special fondness for the most majestic beasts of magic—the dragons.

### Benoist



A legend in the world of cybernetic technology and engineering, Benoist's life is only eclipsed by his reputation. In his youth, he actually worked for Rainier in his engineering department, but had a falling out with the titan of industry—a very literal one—as Rainier threw Benoist out a high-rise window. He survived and rebuilt his broken body with a little help. Benoist joined Malikai on his adventure early on and has stayed with the crew, inspired by the boy's courage and strength of spirit. While most of Benoist's life revolves around technology and science, he has a love for gardening and the world of nature. His cybernetic form holds an array of weaponry and features that make him a formidable addition in Malikai and Grace's fight to protect magic.

### Rainier



Like Grace, Rainier is another relic of the ancient times of magic who has endured over the eons. But whereas Grace is a protector of magic, Rainier has been focused on controlling that power and even trying to keep it from thriving again through acts of violence and brutality. He even turned to technology and worked to stifle the Samusara's effort to bring magic back. For a time, he sought to meld magic and technology together in an effort to revive his extinct race of quasi-dragon beings, the Naitali. Eventually, he found his way back to his magical roots and consolidated its power to reconnect with his ancient heritage.

### Onyx



A member of the ancient Sethoru race, Onyx spent years working for Rainier in his efforts to undermine the return of magic and clashed repeatedly with Grace. Eventually, she embarked on a mission of her own—to revive the forbidden art of Shadow Magic in order to lead the other Sethoru to greatness, apart from any alliance with the Rahtumi. In doing so, she was transformed into more than a warrior; Onyx became a witch of the Shadow Magic.

*Michael Turner's Soulfire created by Michael Turner*

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IT WAS NOT ALWAYS  
AS IT IS NOW.

IT BECAME KNOWN BY SOME AS  
THE AGE OF WONDER.

YET THERE ARE BARELY WORDS  
TO DESCRIBE HOW  
TRULY WONDROUS IT WAS.

FOR THIS WAS A TIME WHEN *MAGIC*  
EXISTED IN THE WORLD.

IT WAS A SOURCE OF ENERGY,  
A FORCE OF GOOD,  
A MEASURE OF HOPE.

THERE WERE THOSE WHO WROTE OF IT  
IN TALES THAT ARE STILL REMEMBERED.

GRIMM, WHITE, BARRIE.  
COUNTLESS OTHERS WHOSE NAMES  
HAVE BEEN WASHED AWAY WITH TIME.

BUT THE STORIES...  
THE MAGIC... STAYED. PAN, TINK, MERLIN,  
AND ALL THE REST STILL FLICKER  
LIKE CANDLES WAITING BY THE WINDOW  
FOR THAT TIME TO RETURN.



JUST AS THERE WERE  
THOSE WHO BATHED IN  
THE LIGHT OF THE TIME...



...THERE WERE THOSE WHO COVETED  
THE POWER AND DESIRED TO MAKE  
IT THEIR OWN.



SOME SAY THE VERY TASTE OF AIR  
BEGAN TO CHANGE.  
WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN SWEET,  
WAS NOW ACRID AND BITTER.





HIS NAME WAS *RAINIER*.

HE TOOK HIS ARMIES AND INFECTED  
THE INNOCENCE OF THE DRAGONS.

IT TOOK SO LITTLE  
TO DESTROY SO MUCH...





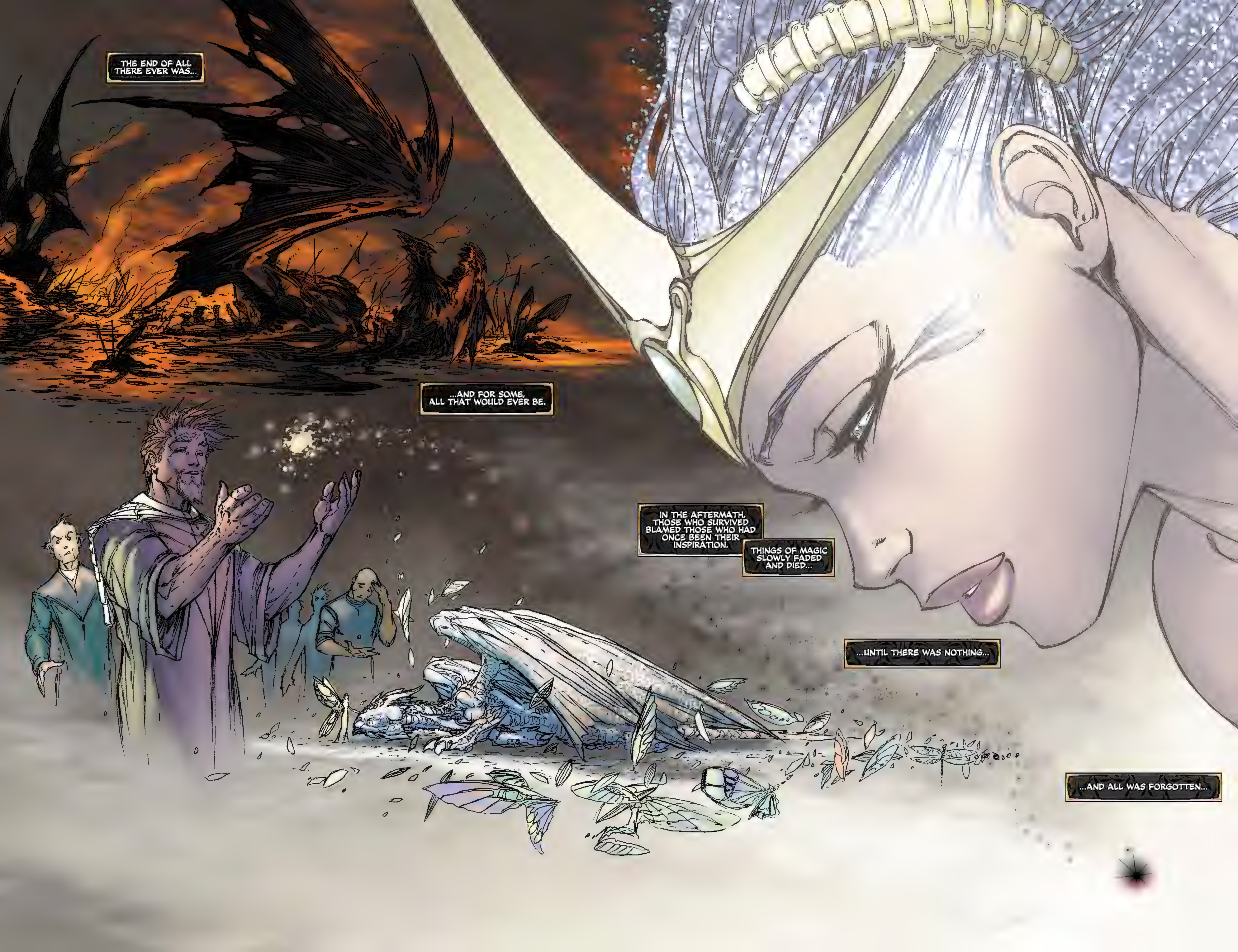
...BUT WE WOULD NOT GO WITHOUT A FIGHT.

THE BATTLES RAGED ON.  
SOME MARKED IT BY THE BLOOD.  
SOME BY THOSE WHO FELL.

I ONLY SAW IT AS A BEGINNING...

...AND AN END.





THE END OF ALL  
THERE EVER WAS...

...AND FOR SOME,  
ALL THAT WOULD EVER BE.

IN THE AFTERMATH,  
THOSE WHO SURVIVED  
BLAMED THOSE WHO HAD  
ONCE BEEN THEIR  
INSPIRATION.

THINGS OF MAGIC  
SLOWLY FADED  
AND DIED...

...UNTIL THERE WAS NOTHING...

...AND ALL WAS FORGOTTEN...



THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY WE CAN  
REKINDLE THE AGE OF WONDER.

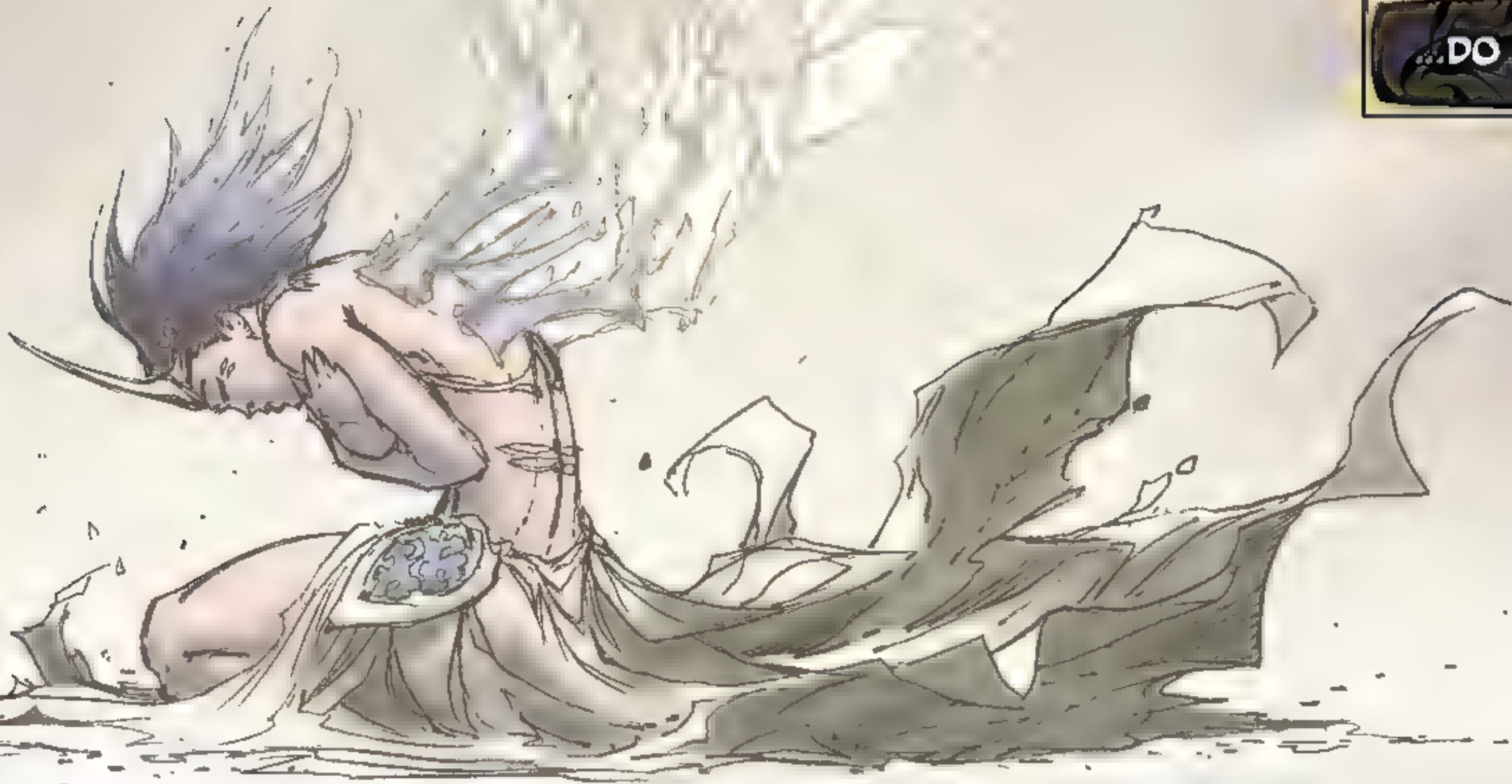
THAT MAGIC CANNOT  
EVER TRULY DIE  
BUT LAYS DORMANT...

...WAITING...

WAITING FOR A TIME WHEN THERE  
ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN IT AGAIN  
AND SEE THE GOOD IT CAN BRING  
TO THE EARTH AND TO THE UNIVERSE.

QUESTION IS...

...DO YOU BELIEVE?

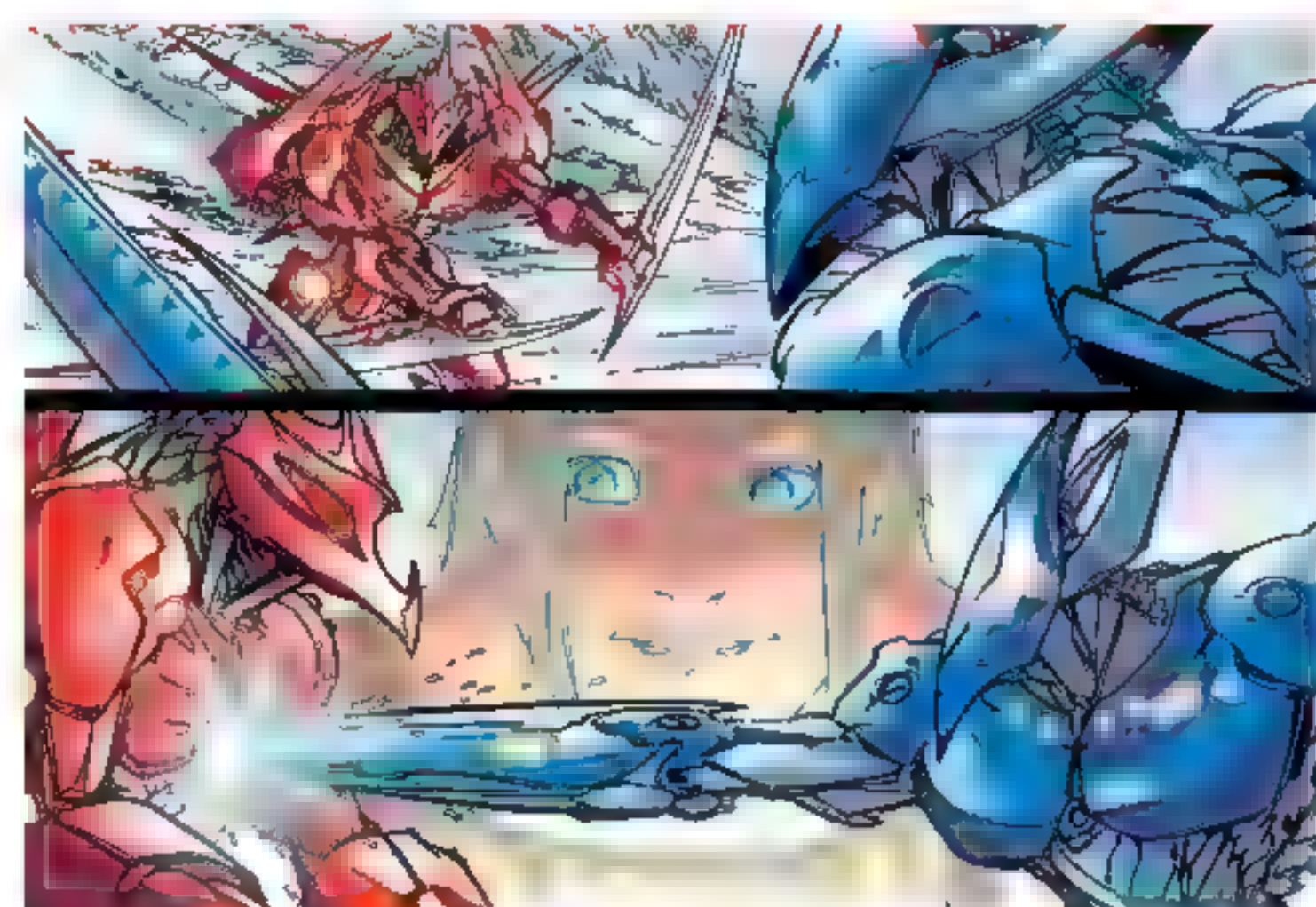




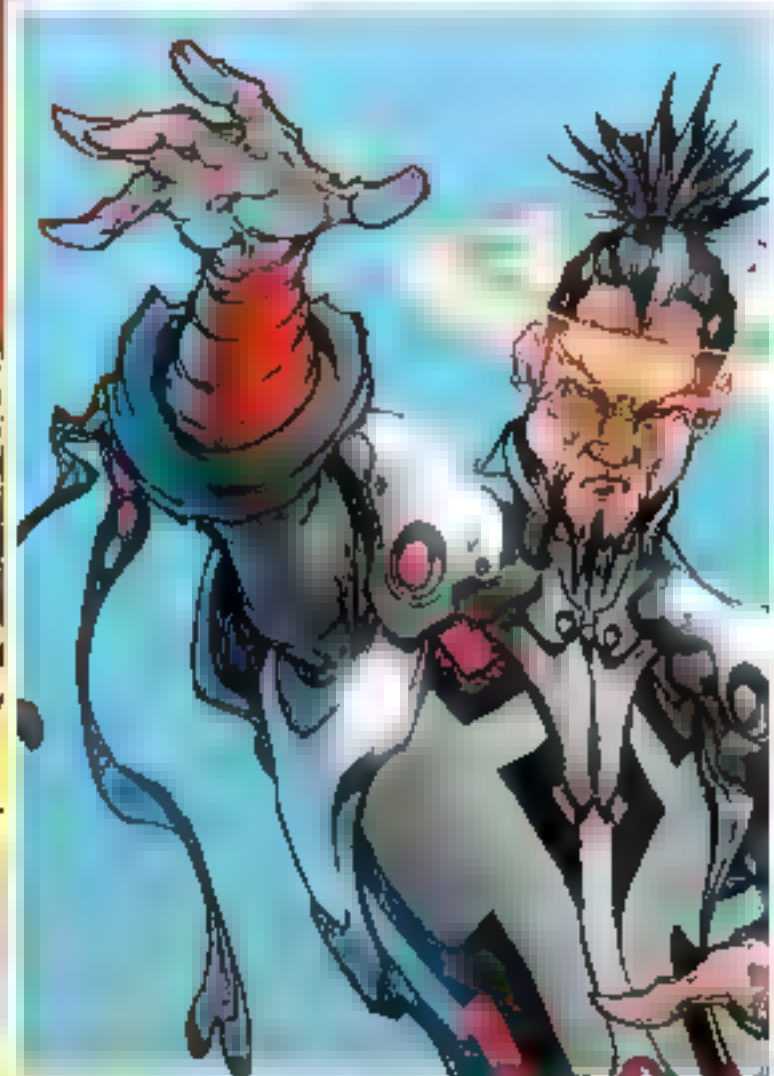
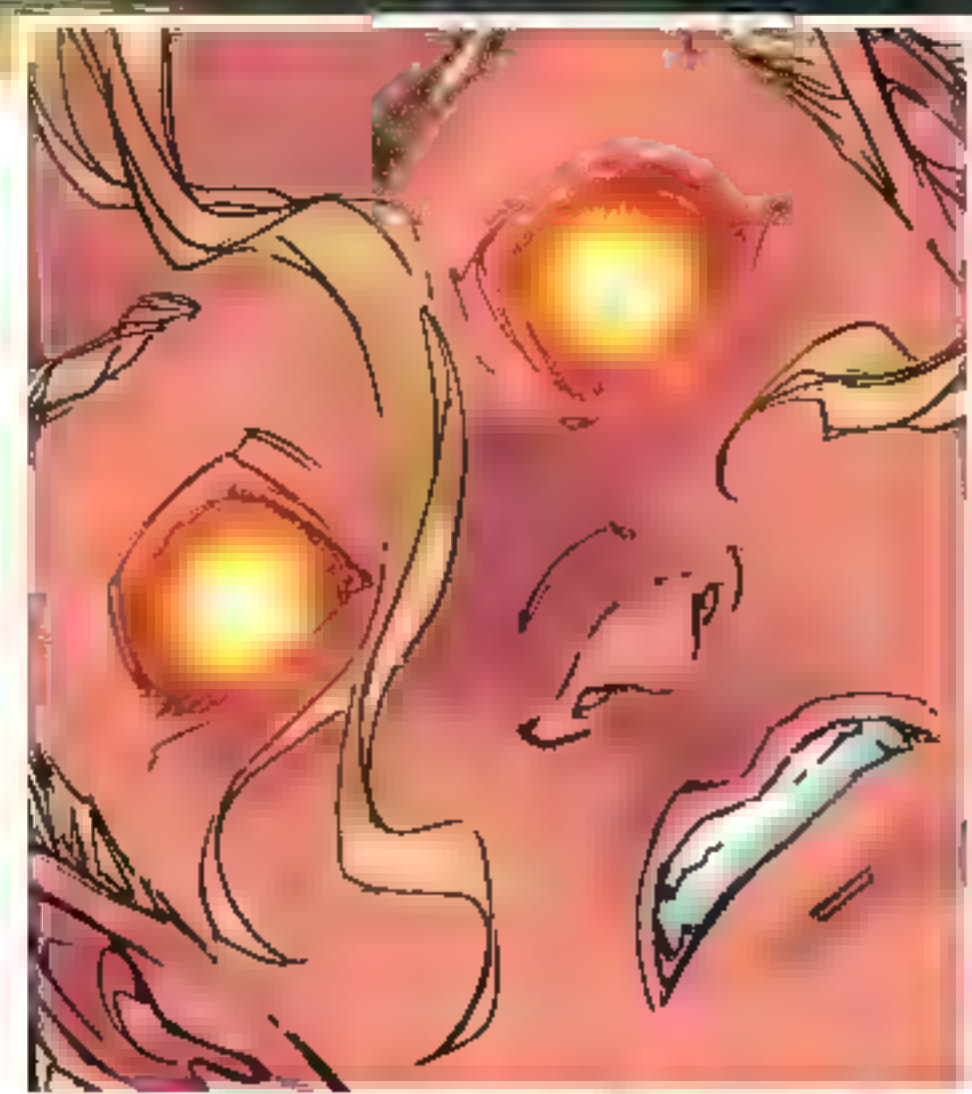
# SOULFIRE Volume 1 — “Magic Returns”



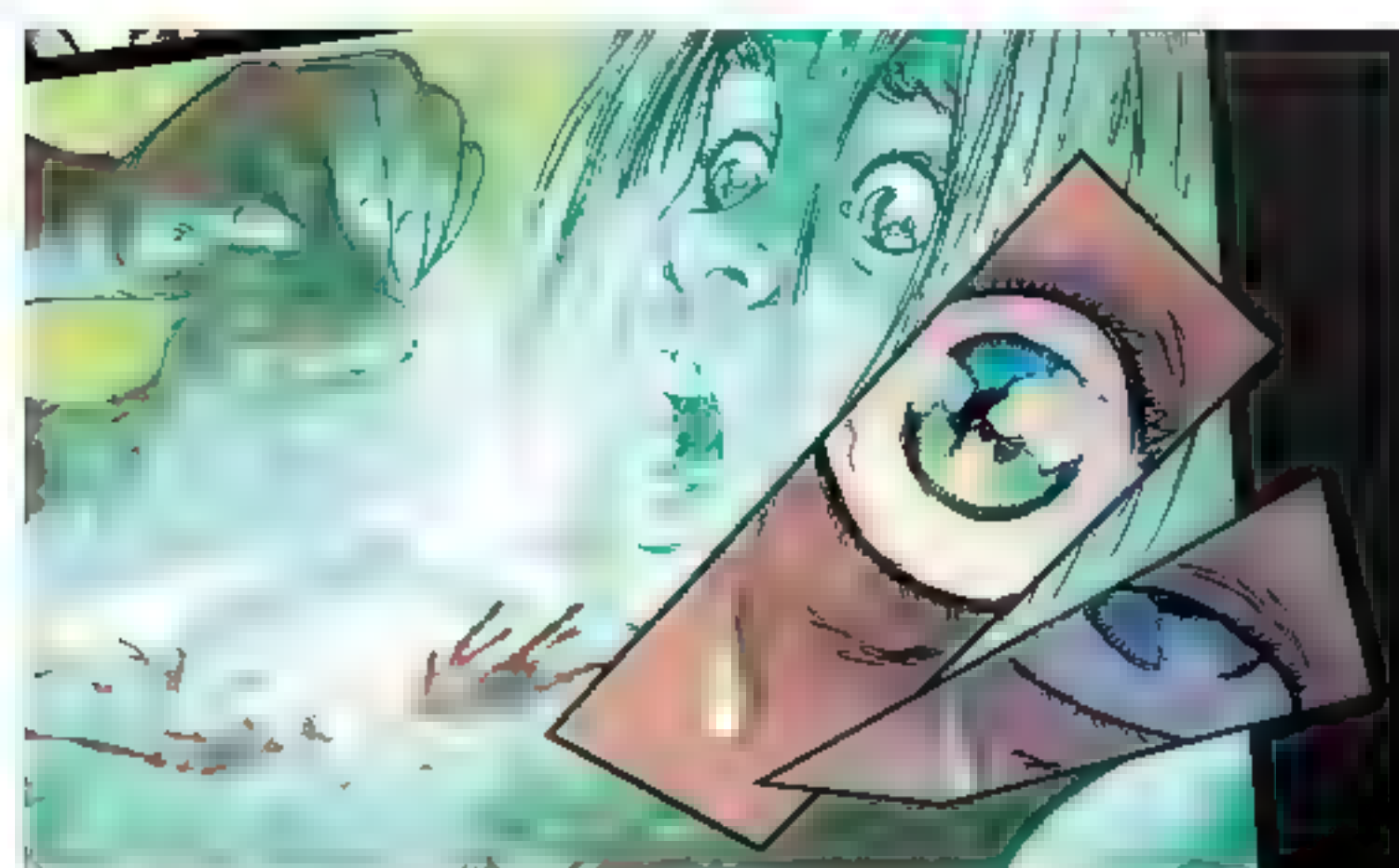
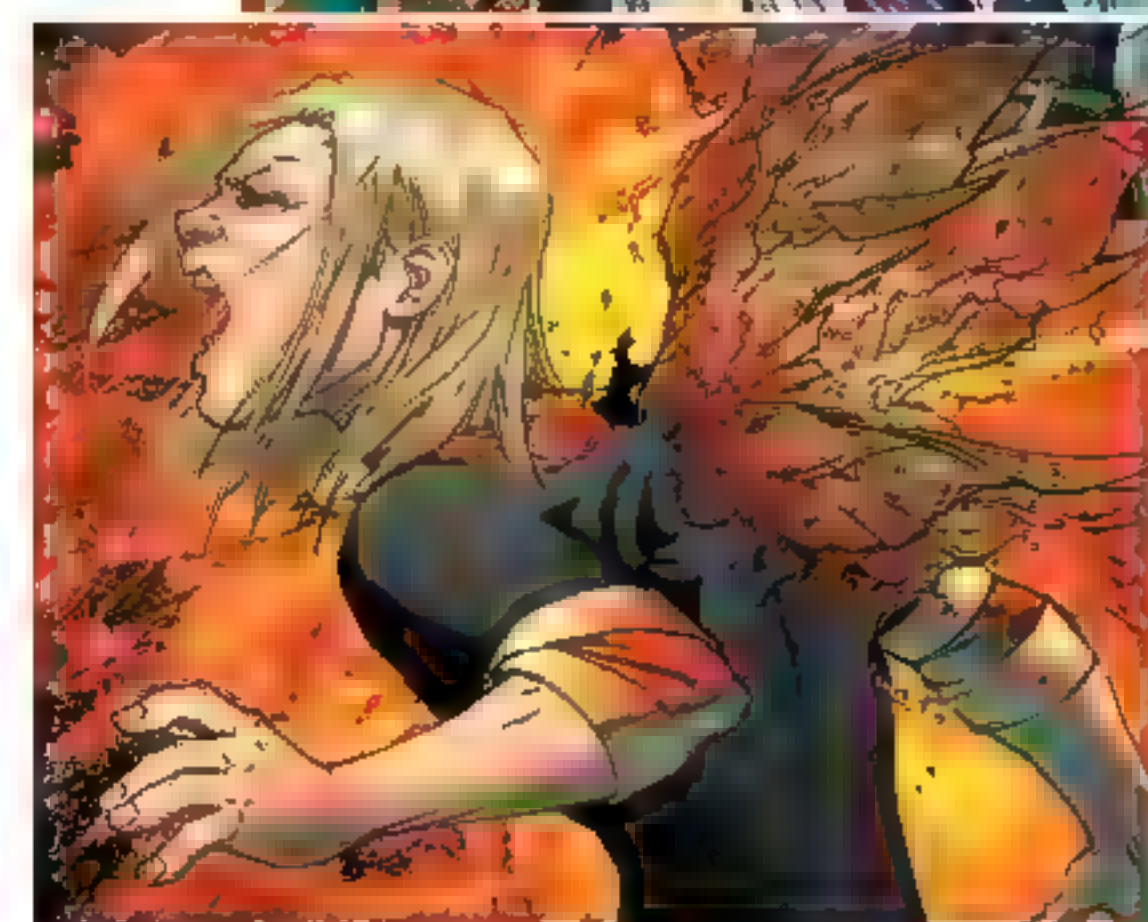
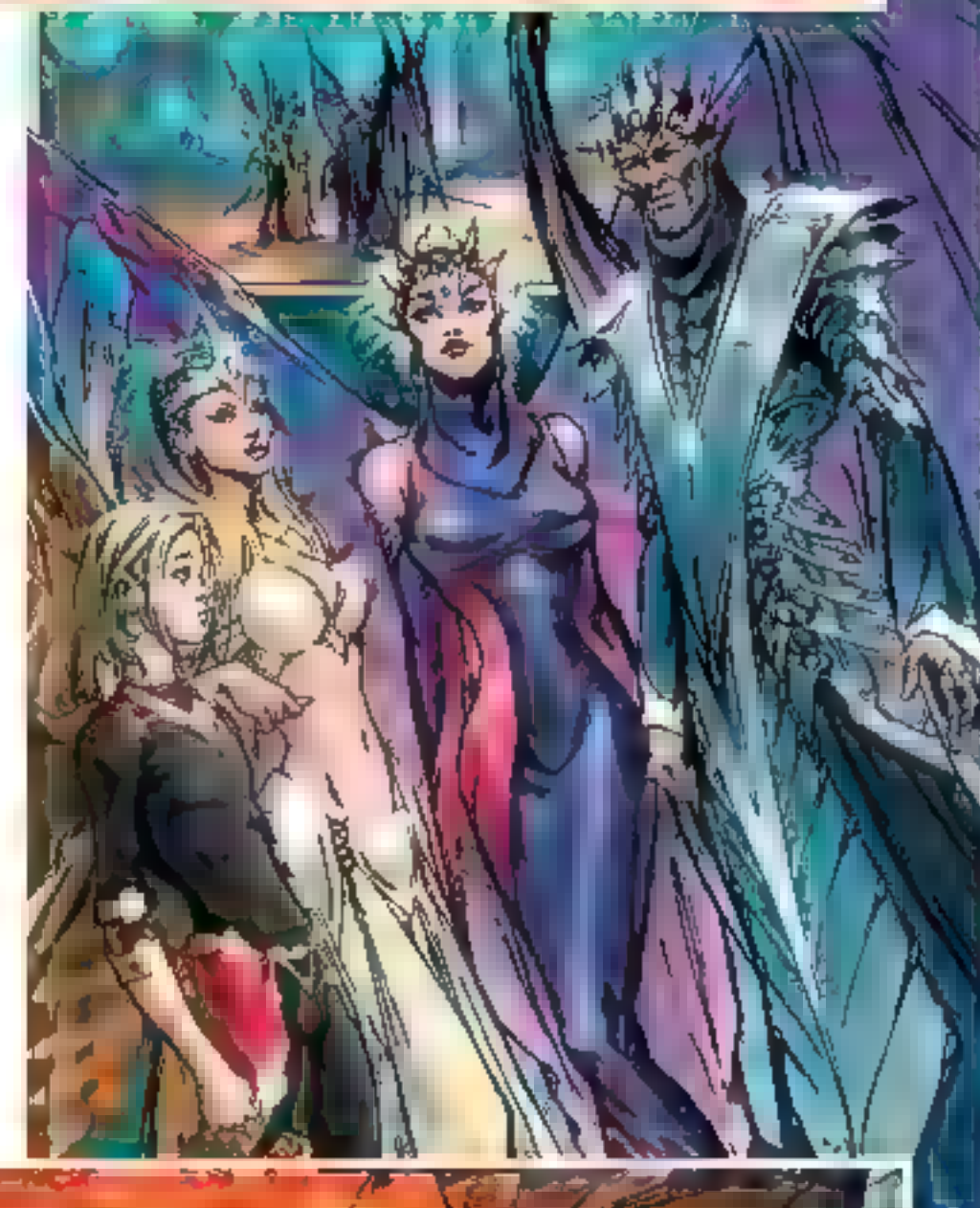
In the future landscape of San Francisco, an ominous presence appears in the skies above—a giant, mechanical dragon that unleashes hellfire on the city, all in the service of a depraved figure named Rainier. He is a near-immortal man born in a time long forgotten, a time when magic was the ruling energy of the world. Since then, the magic has faded, and he has dedicated his life to using technology to increase his strength and power. Now, as the next age of magic seems to be drawing near, he wants to stop it from happening. To do so, he must destroy the latest incarnation of the Samusara, a unique spirit that will be the spark to reignite the power of magic. This spirit resides in a seemingly ordinary boy named Malikai.



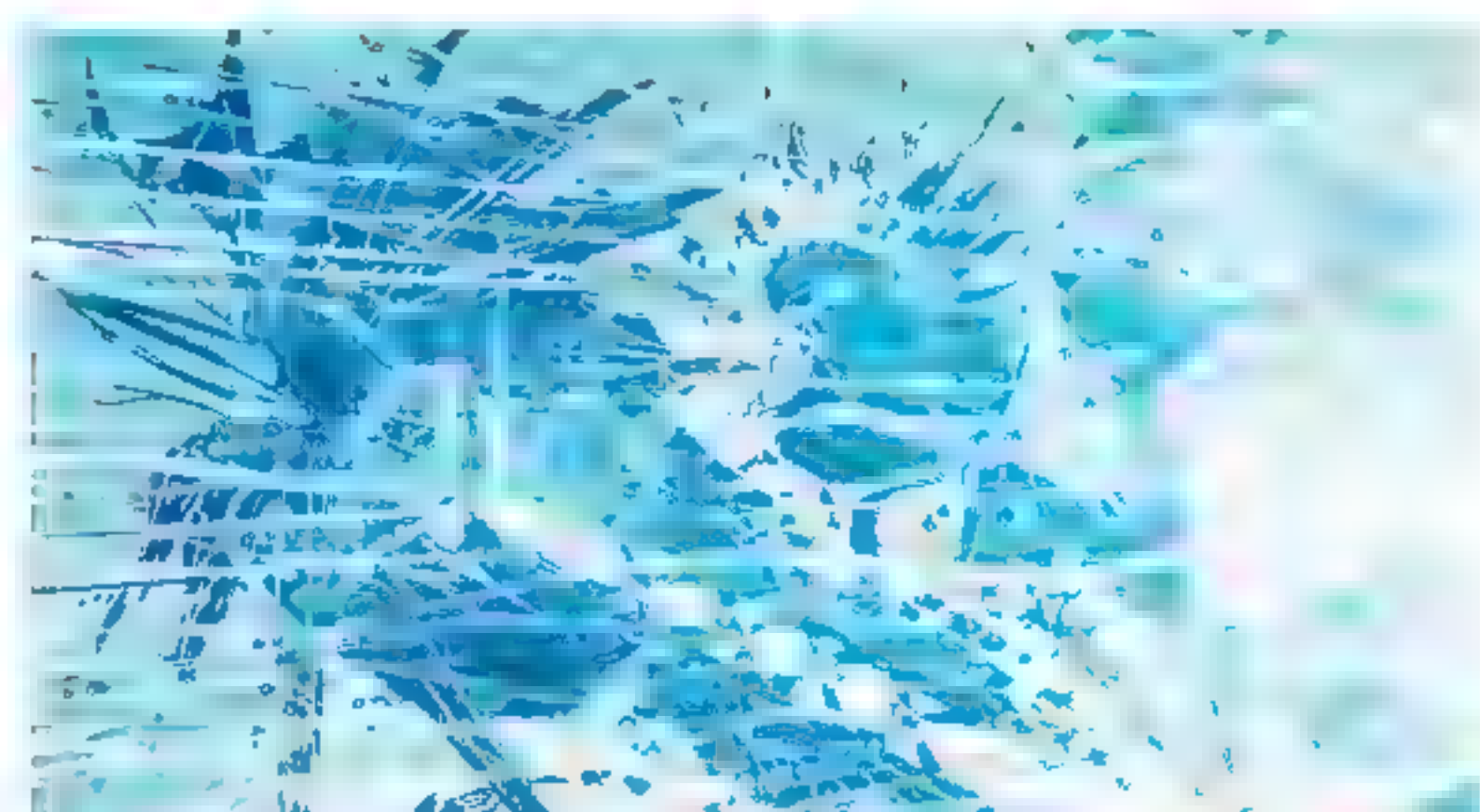
Malikai enjoys a life of simple pleasures, hanging out with his friends, PJ and Sonia. But all that comes to an end when Rainier's acolyte, Onyx, comes for him, and he is rescued by another winged-warrior named Grace. Under her protection, Malikai embarks on a journey of self-discovery as he learns of his special place in the universe. Together with his friends, and help from a tech genius called Benoist, Malikai spans the globe in an effort to fulfill his destiny. With Rainier chasing him every step of the way,



Malikai meets with the legendary masters, who swore a duty to teach and guide him along. In Hawai'i, the master Kamea shares with Malikai the philosophy of spirit that lies as the very foundation of magic. In Tokyo, the master Ren shows Malikai how to harness and utilize the great power emerging within him. Venturing to the mystical hidden realm of the Everlands itself, Malikai learns of the delicate balance of light and dark, and order and chaos, from the binary rulers representing the two ancient races of magic—Faye of the Rahtumi and Arlin of the Sethoru.



With the help of Onyx, Rainier is able to bring his technology through the mystical barrier into the Everlands in order to snuff out the light that Malikai is trying to spark. Beaten and broken, Malikai seems all but defeated, as he reaches out to Grace for help. She responds by stabbing him through the heart with a sacred, ceremonial dagger. In truth, she did not kill him, but freed his spirit to fulfill his destiny. Malikai rises up reborn, as he unleashes a great surge of magic across the entire planet. Rainier is furious at his failure and seeks to destroy Malikai regardless. However, Malikai is brimming with power and manages to defeat Rainier, tearing his artificial limbs from the husk of flesh that remains. Rainier is able to get away, but the damage is done.

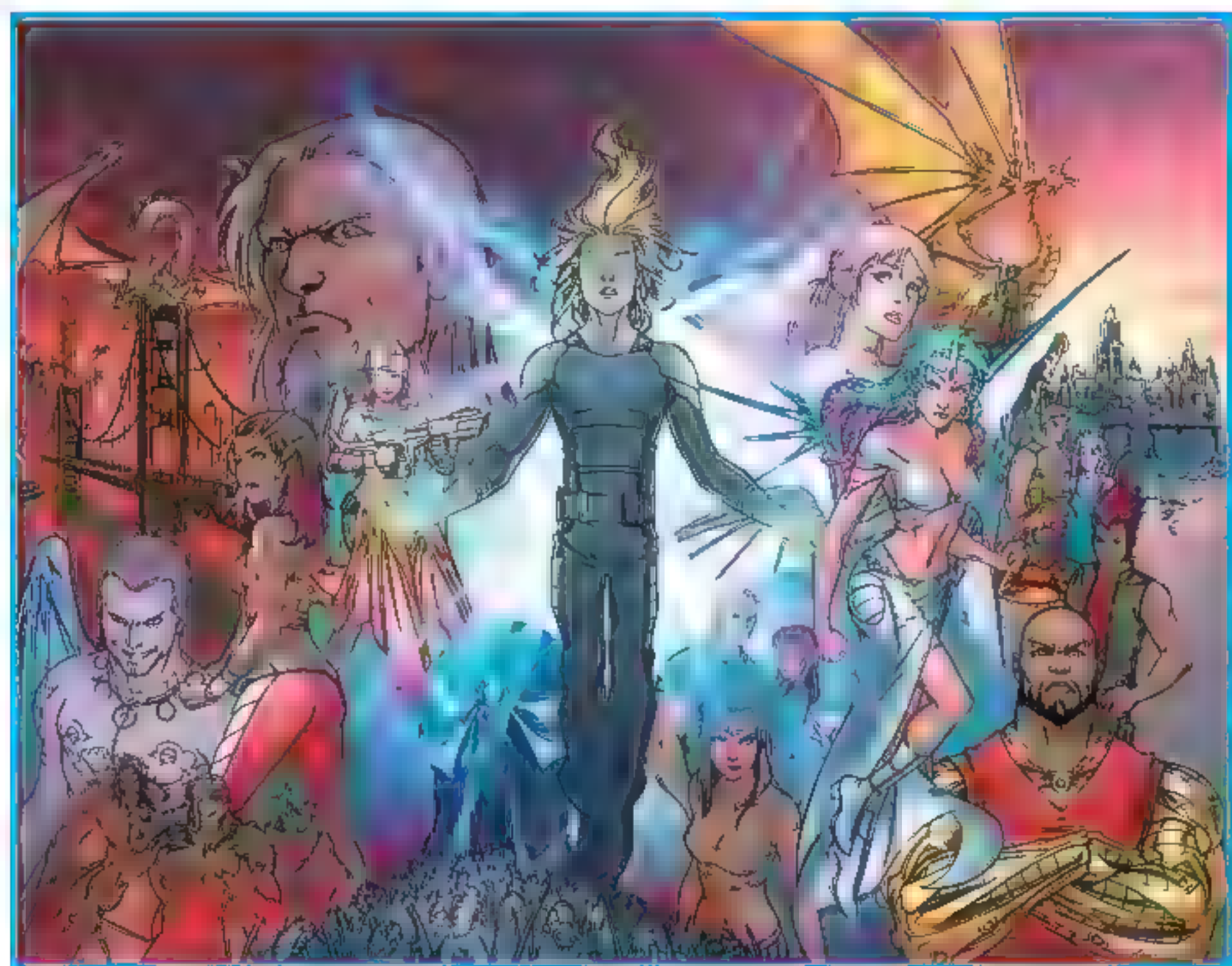


As for Malikai and his friends, they are able to bask in the glow of the light that has returned to the world once again. The next great age of magic is upon them.

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# SOULFIRE Volume 2 — “Dragon Fall”



While Malikai and the rest of the gang try to enjoy some much deserved down-time in Sydney, Australia, Grace answers the call of duty, trying to keep the dragons recently reborn to the world from being destroyed by the military might of nervous nations. But, she is not the only one interested in the majestic beasts as Rainier is seeking them out as well, determined to extract their DNA and use technology to help resurrect his lost ancestors, the Naitali (Nightstalkers). Benoist and PJ decide to venture to the notorious Eight Continent, an enormous island of junk, created to house a large portion of the world's trash. There, Benoist seeks out an old friend, Gabriel, but is turned away harshly by a group of unruly teenagers who are rather protective of their mentor. Back in Sydney, Malikai meets Jayden, another person coping with her newfound magical abilities. She seems nice and sweet, but her presence annoys Sonia, who cannot tell if it's just jealousy or something more.



Benoist and PJ fight their way through a stronghold to find that Gabriel is near death, kept alive only by machines. One of the teenagers was hiding that fact in order to stay in control of the island. With a heavy heart, Benoist says goodbye to the man who saved his own life and cuts the power to Gabriel's machine, letting his body and soul move on. When they return to Sydney, the tension from the new love triangle is in full effect. Sonia is about to leave, when Grace arrives, but whatever petty issues they have are irrelevant, as Rainier has kidnapped the dragon called Marigold.



Venturing to America, Grace leads Malikai and the others first to Los Angeles to find another member of her race named Dex, who is living in obscurity as a tattoo artist. Together, they head to San Francisco to confront Rainier and free Marigold. They are attacked in the streets by Rainier's latest creation—the cyborg Nightstalkers, grafted together through magic, dragon DNA, and technology. They fight them off, and Jayden gets a major rush from the action. Malikai is disturbed by her tendency for violence, but she is in no mood for a lecture. Her

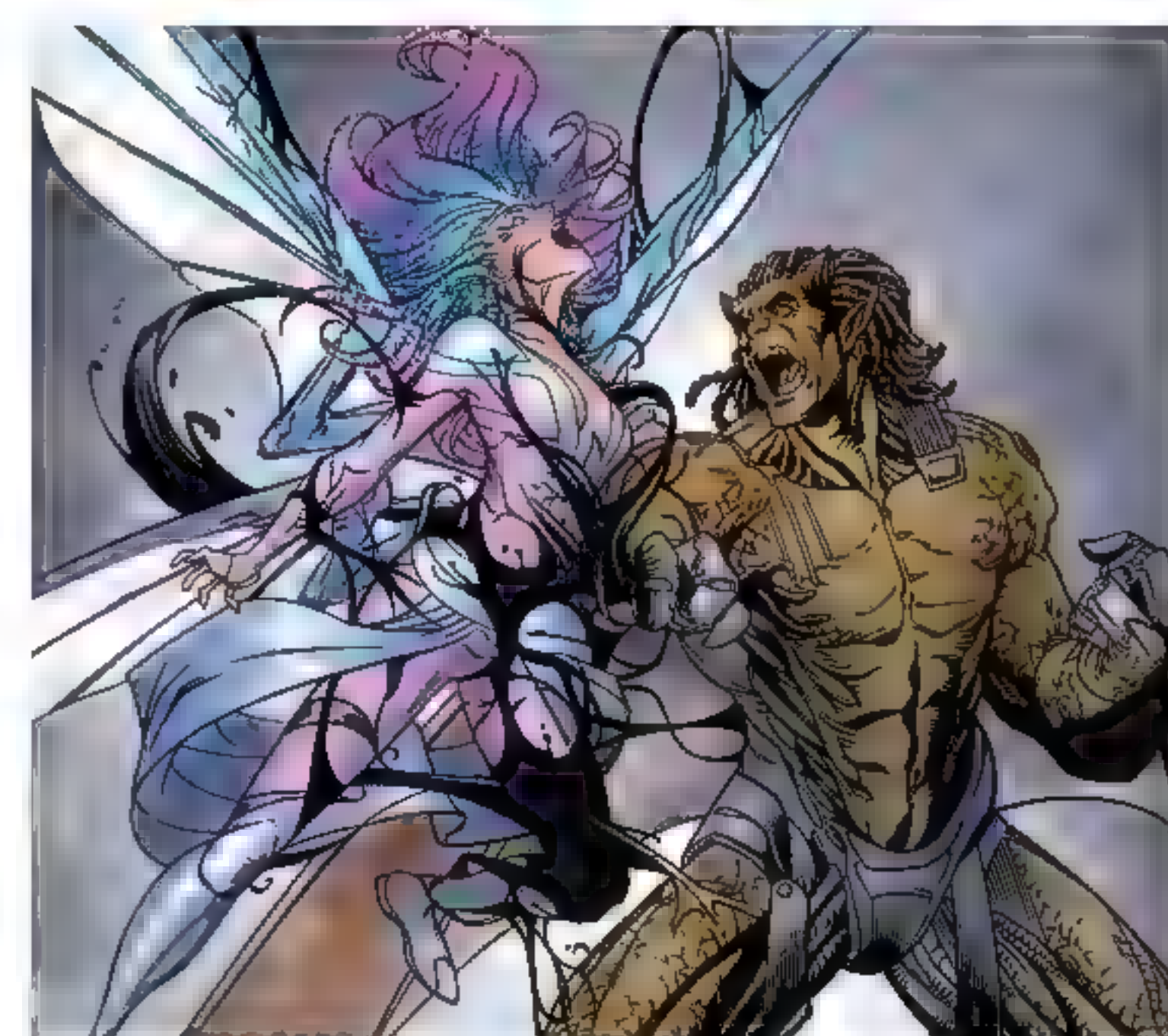
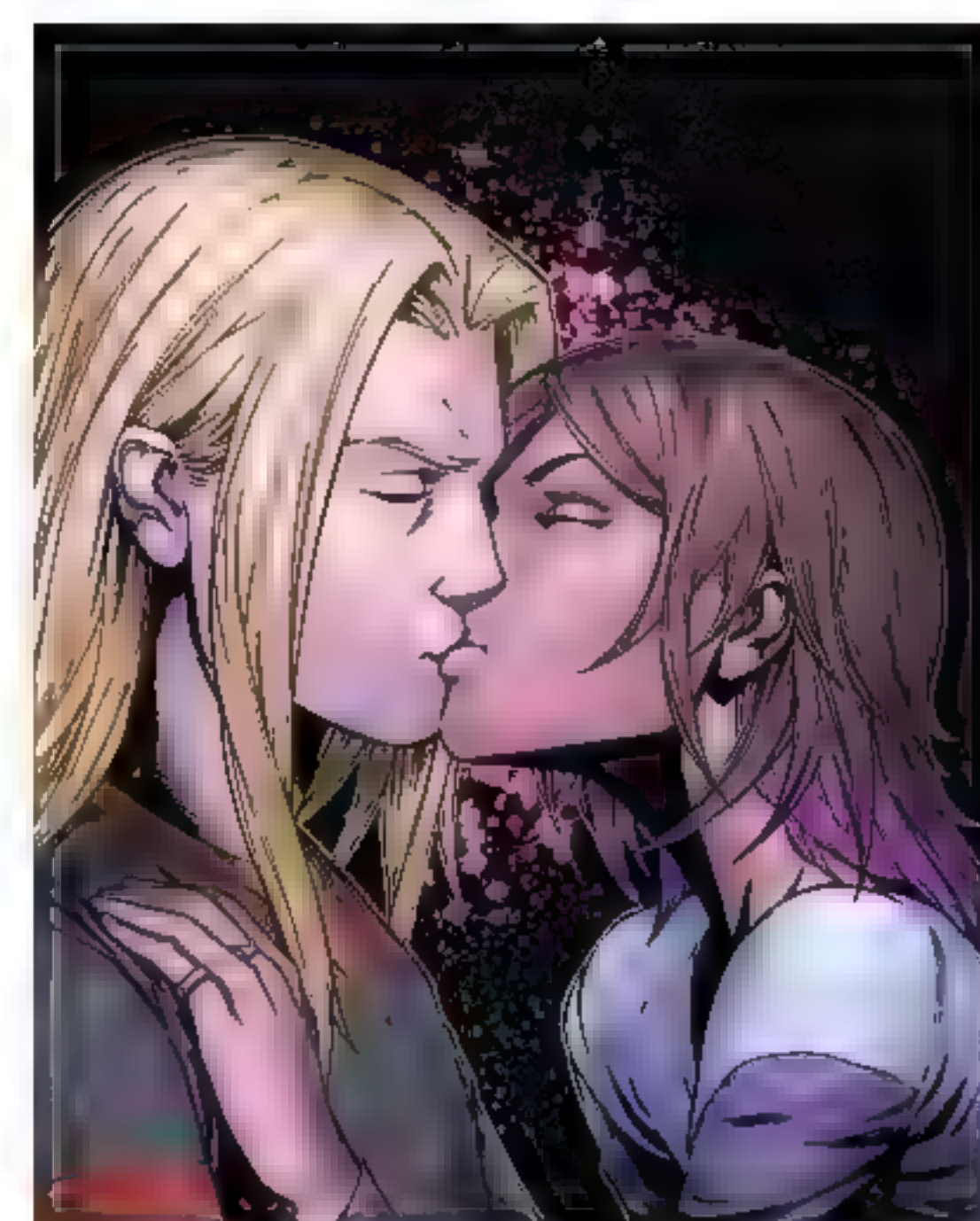
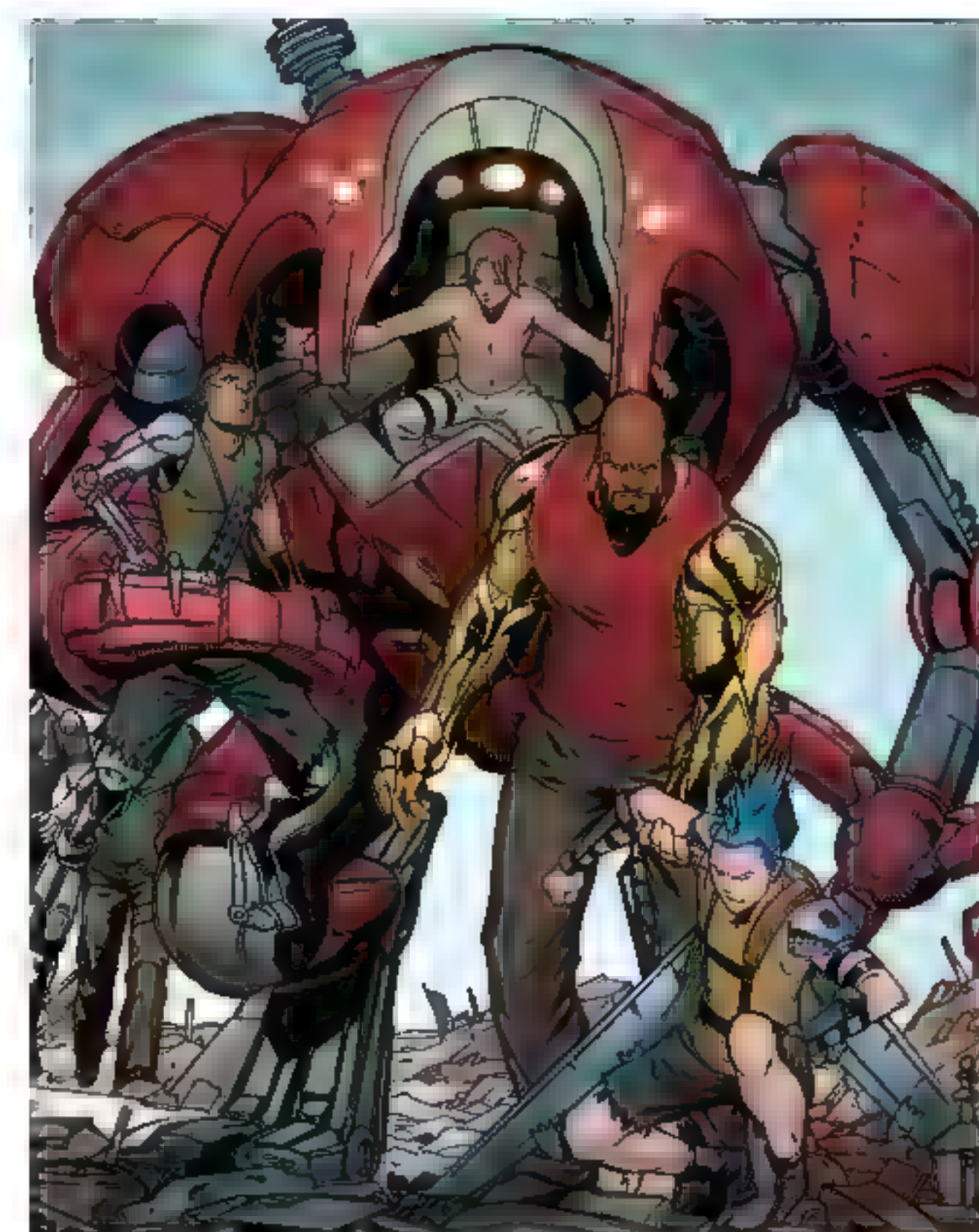
interest in Malikai was an interest in power—and this Rainier sounds more her speed. She leaves Malikai and surrenders to Rainier's troops.

In his high-rise, Jayden not only meets Rainier, but also meets his special helper, Cole. Cole and Jayden are somewhat kindred spirits as both have a unique connection to the magic that allows them to absorb the magical energy from others, leeching from them almost like magical vampires. Grace and Malikai make their assault on Rainier's building, but the forces in their way are immense. Grace finds Marigold, but the poor beast has been modified with technology and essentially



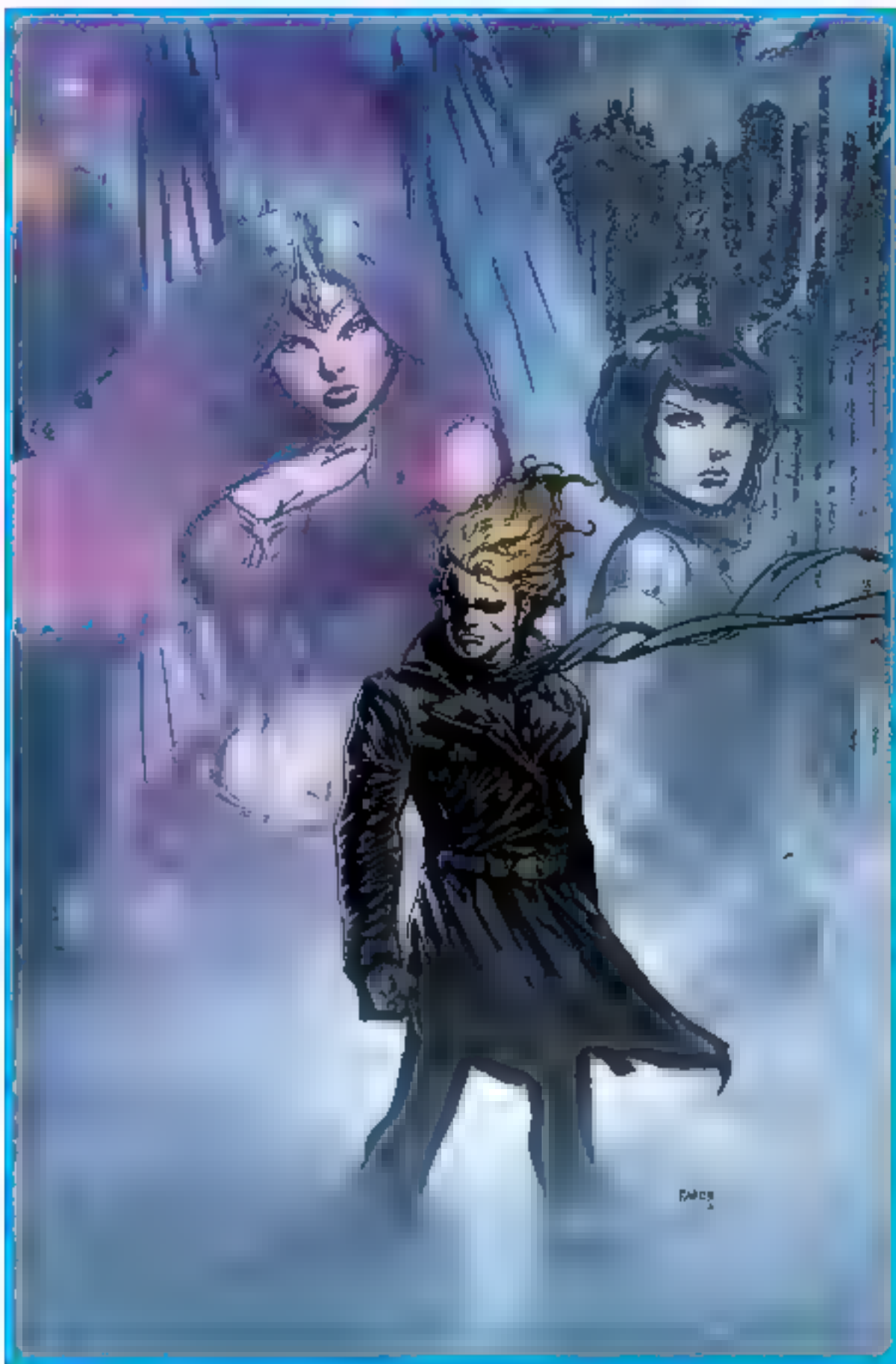
turned into a slave of Rainier. Malikai finds Jayden imprisoned and frees her only to realize it was a trap. Cole and Jayden both attack him, looking to feed off his immense magical power.

Malikai becomes enraged and unleashes a fury unlike anything before. He lays waste to Cole, Jayden and the Nightstalkers, and he sends Rainier fleeing for his life. But, he doesn't stop there. In a fit of rage, he kills Marigold and levels Rainier's building. Grace and Sonia and the rest of Malikai's friends are horrified and shaken by his display of destruction. Overwhelmed and somewhat frightened, Malikai flies off, leaving them behind. His soul leads him to a remote cave in another part of the world, where he takes solace. Little does he know that the cave was the home for Khaaz, a great and terrible conquerer who lived eons ago and was in fact an earlier incarnation of the Samusara—he and Malikai share the same soul. What darkness this portends, Malikai does not know. But, he is scared.

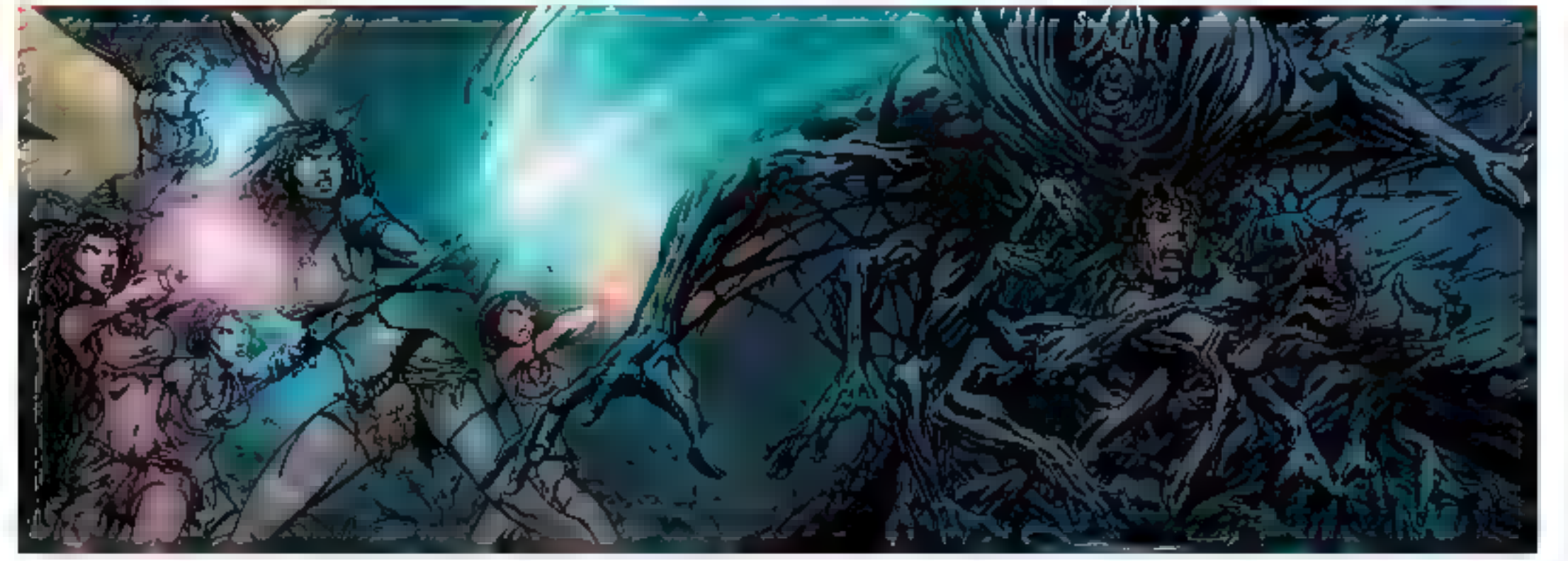




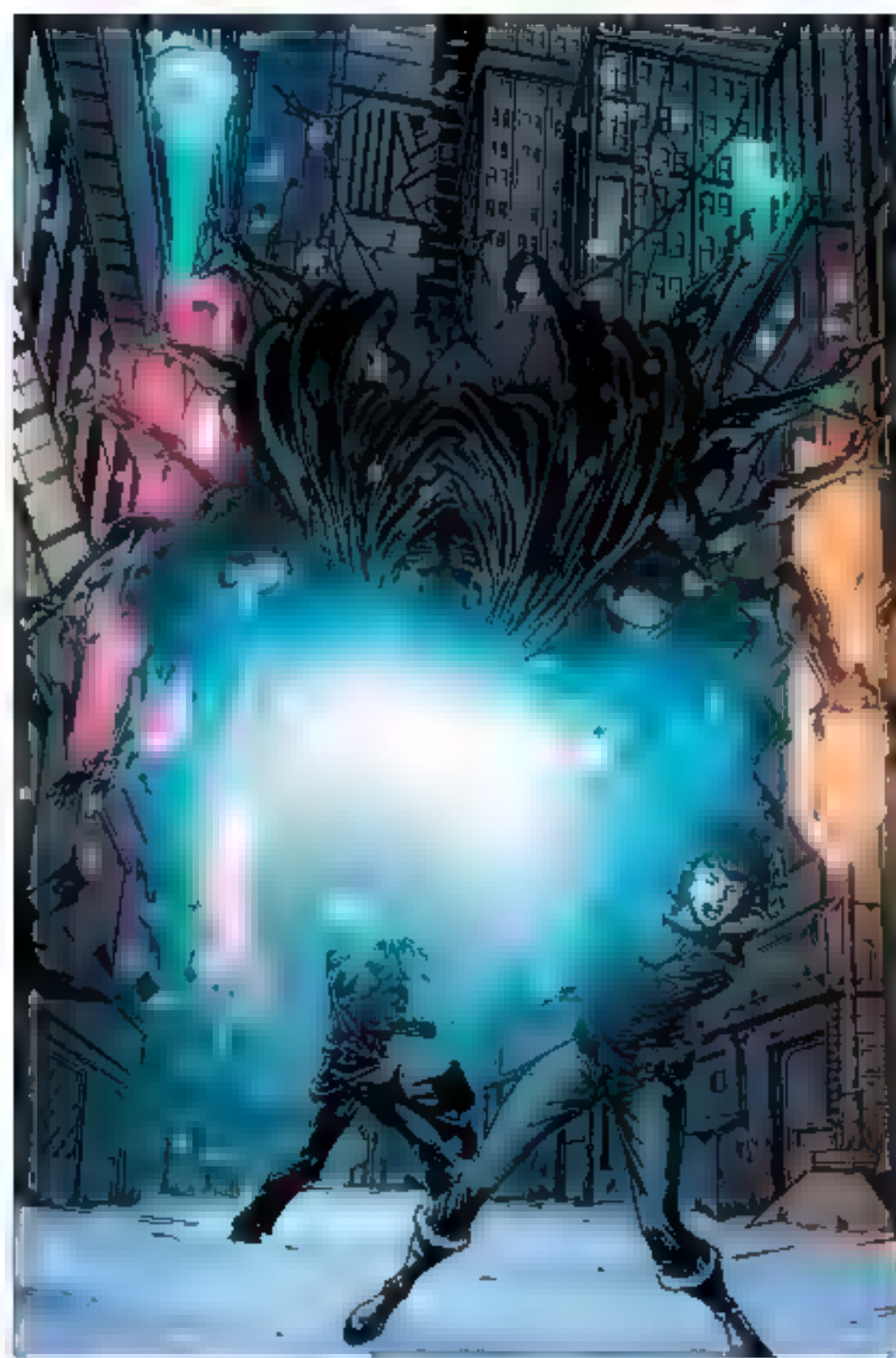
# SOULFIRE Volume 3 — “Seeds of Chaos”



In the jungles of Africa, a tribe of warrior women led by Miya fights against a strange creature of darkness, a literal nightmare of flesh, bone and magic—the Chaos itself. They survive the battle, but Miya knows the war rages on, and there is only one way to stop it. She must kill the spirit of the Samusara.



Malikai wanders alone in the snowy countryside of Russia. He's still haunted by his recent actions and worried about what darkness may lurk inside of him. He reaches a small mining community and is befriended by a barkeep named Laura. Their friendship is quickly put to the test when the Chaos creature shows up, devouring every soul in its path. Malikai reveals his magical powers to fight off the creature and then realizes that he has a lot of explaining to do to Paula.



Meanwhile, in the Everlands, the two races of magic, the Sethoru and the Rahtumi, work to keep their fragile alliance under the leadership of Arlin and Faye. Grace is alerted to a break-in of the sacred library of the kingdom and discovers Onyx has stolen an ancient tome. She tries to stop her, but Onyx escapes. She makes her way to a hidden cave and uses the incantations listed in the book to tap into the ancient, forbidden art of sShadow Magic. Hundreds of bugs rise up from the dirt and seemingly devour her.



As Malikai still tries to make sense of the Chaos creature, a possible answer comes from the tip of a spear. Miya and her warrior tribe attack Malikai, determined to destroy his spirit once and for all, and in doing so, end the terror of the Chaos creature. As Malikai battles them, the Chaos creature arrives and attacks everyone. Seeing no other way to escape, Malikai takes Paula and descends into a giant crevasse as the mountain comes crashing down, sealing them in complete darkness. Trapped but safe, Malikai struggles to understand the dynamics unfolding. He reaches into his memories and those of the other Samusara's lifetimes, realizing that his soul is connected to all magic, both the light and the dark, the chaos and the order. It's all part of him.

Onyx storms the kingdom of the Everlands, reborn as a witch of the Shadow Magic. She reaches the throne room and confronts Arlin, condemning him for betraying his race. She slaughters him in gruesome fashion and declares herself queen of the Sethoru. She announces an exodus of all her people. They will build a new kingdom and eventually destroy all Rahtumi.



When Malikai and Paula finally emerge from beneath the rubble, their problems are still waiting for them. Miya and her warriors attack again, as the Chaos creature roams about, devouring everything in sight. Malikai manages to fend off Miya and her tribe, but not before the Chaos creature gets to Paula. Malikai frees her and they flee, but the damage is done. Malikai watches Paula die in his arms, burdened by the knowledge that he is to blame.

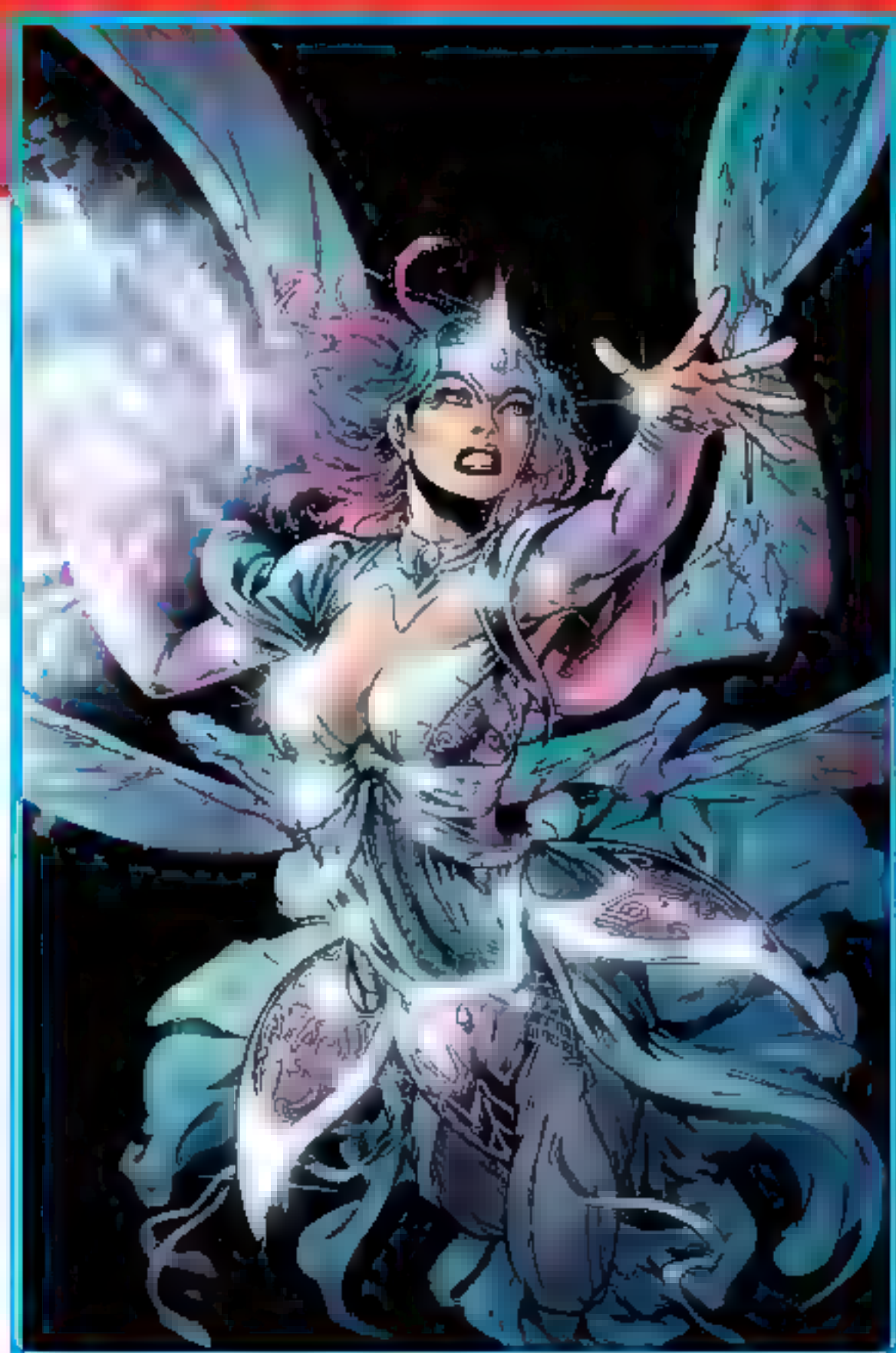
Malikai returns to the Everlands, seeking out answers from Grace, unaware of the civil war currently being waged. Grace tries to help Malikai uncover the secret about his own heritage, unbeknownst that Faye has greeted a visitor as well—Miya.

Anger fills the throne room as Malikai and Miya confront one another again. Miya is convinced that Malikai is the source of the Chaos creature, and while he doesn't argue the point, he does have issues with her solution; That being, his death. Their fight must wait however, as Onyx and her shadow magic army attack the Everlands. During the course of the all-out war, Onyx is defeated by a greater threat looming large, as the Chaos creature is bigger and more destructive than ever, feeding off the magic of the Everlands. Knowing that Miya is right, Malikai sees there is only one solution. He absorbs the Chaos creature back into his body, back into his soul and pays the ultimate sacrifice, destroying the evil entity by destroying himself.

Grace is overcome by grief. They may have defeated Onyx and her uprising, and stopped the threat of the Chaos creature, but at what cost?

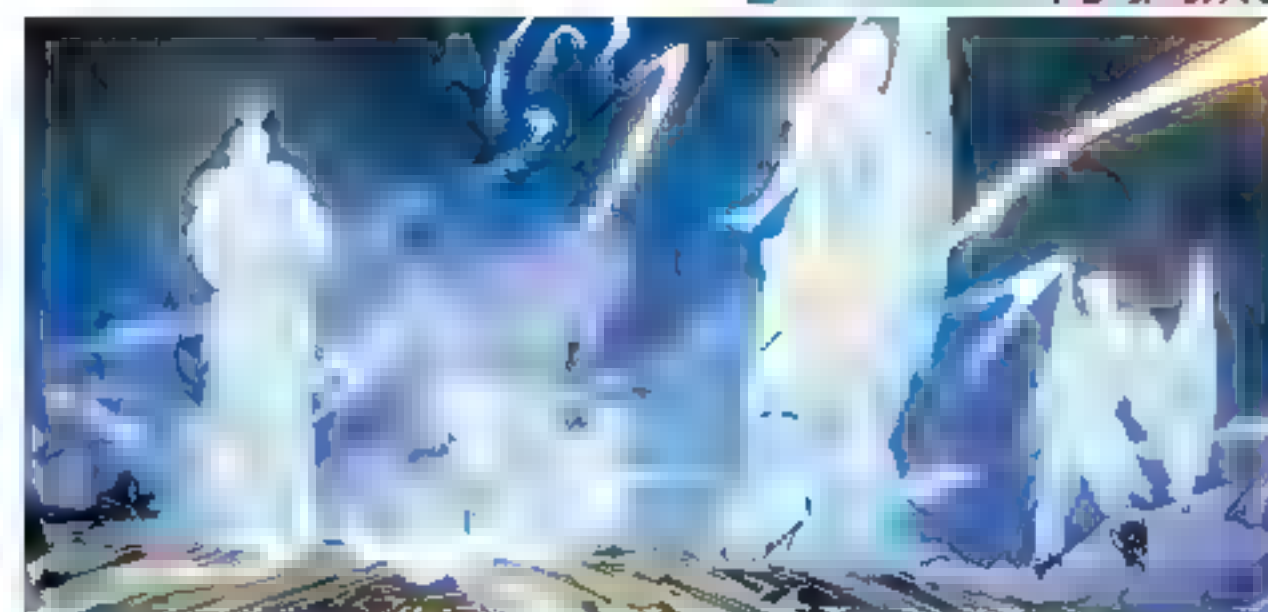
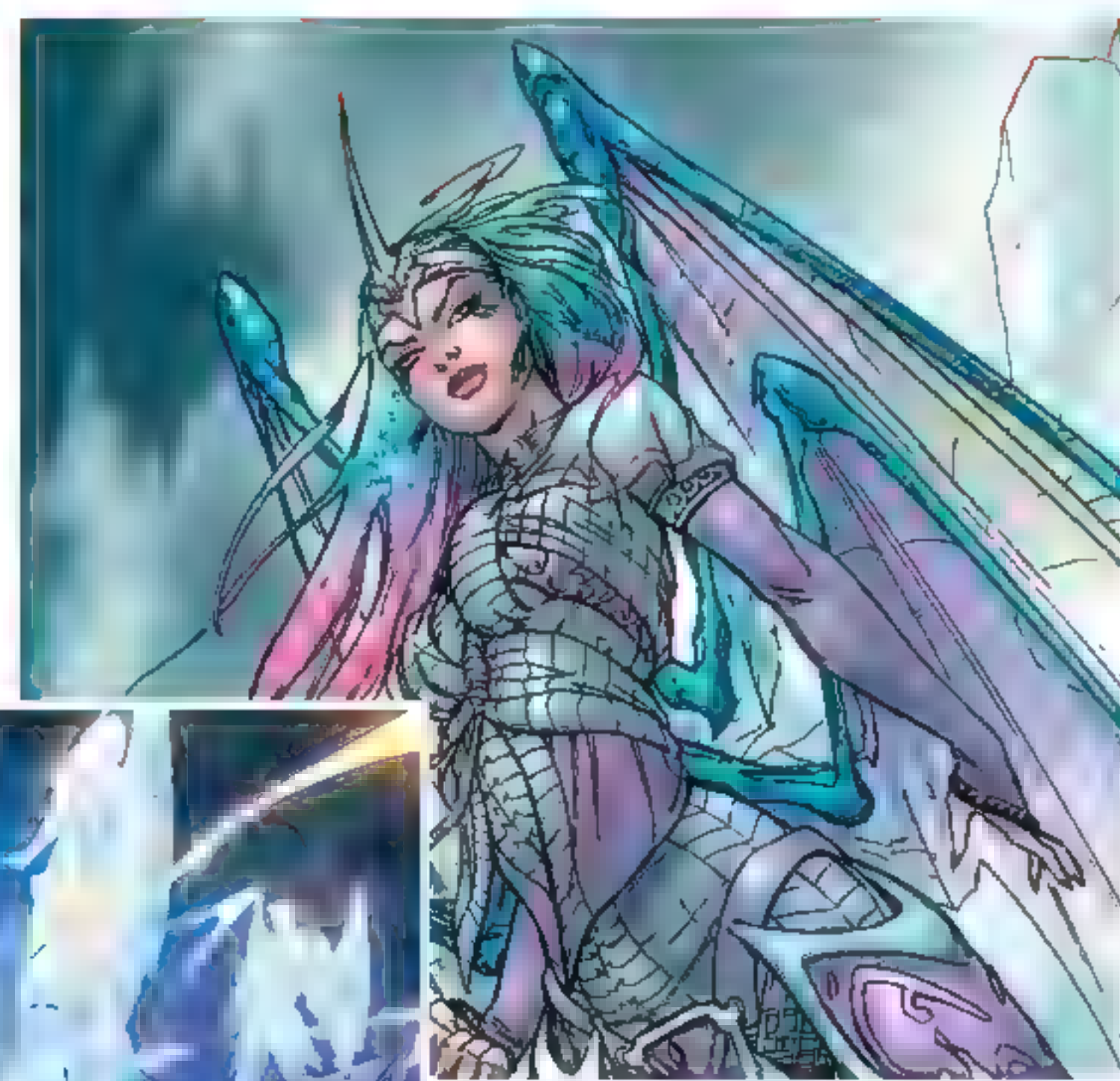




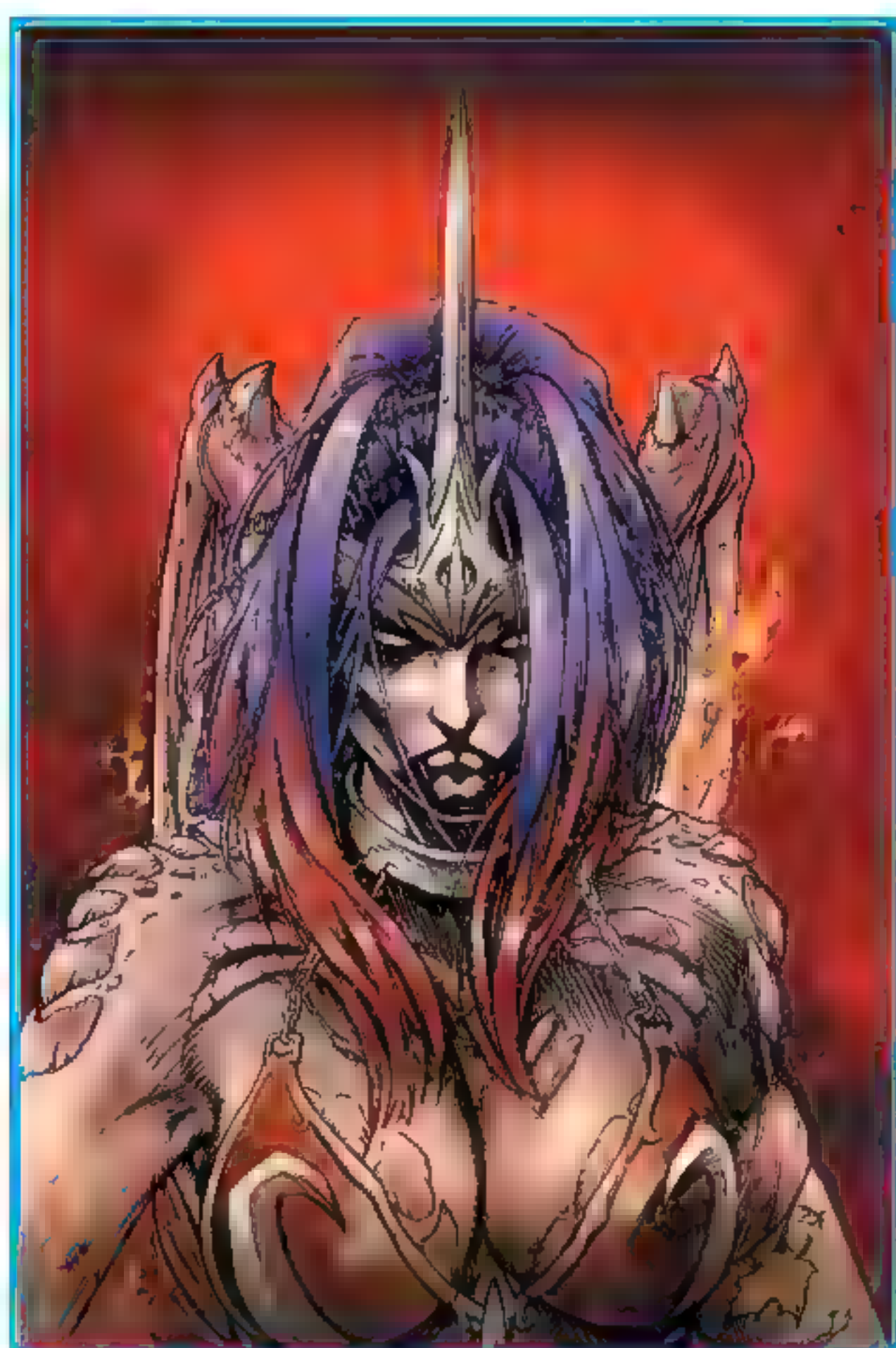


## SOULFIRE: Search for the Light

Grace embarks on a harrowing journey in order to save Malikai's spirit. With the help of the other masters, Ren, Faye, Pili, and the newly appointed leader of the Sethoru, Sarin, Grace ventures into a realm beyond death itself and frees Malikai's soul from oblivion. But in doing so, Grace is exposed to a darkness of unparalleled evil—a darkness she brings back with her.

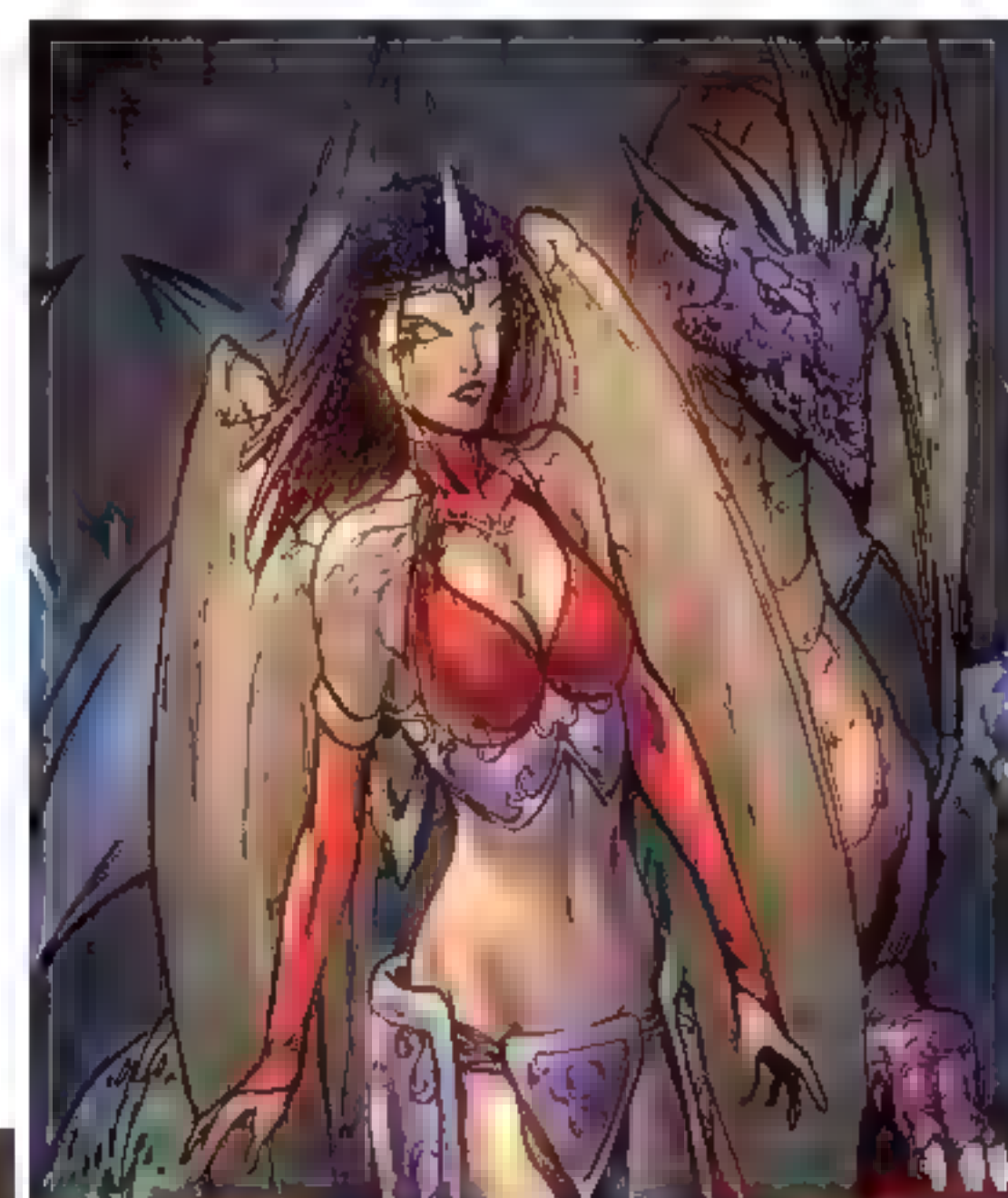


## SOULFIRE Volume 4 — “Dark Grace”

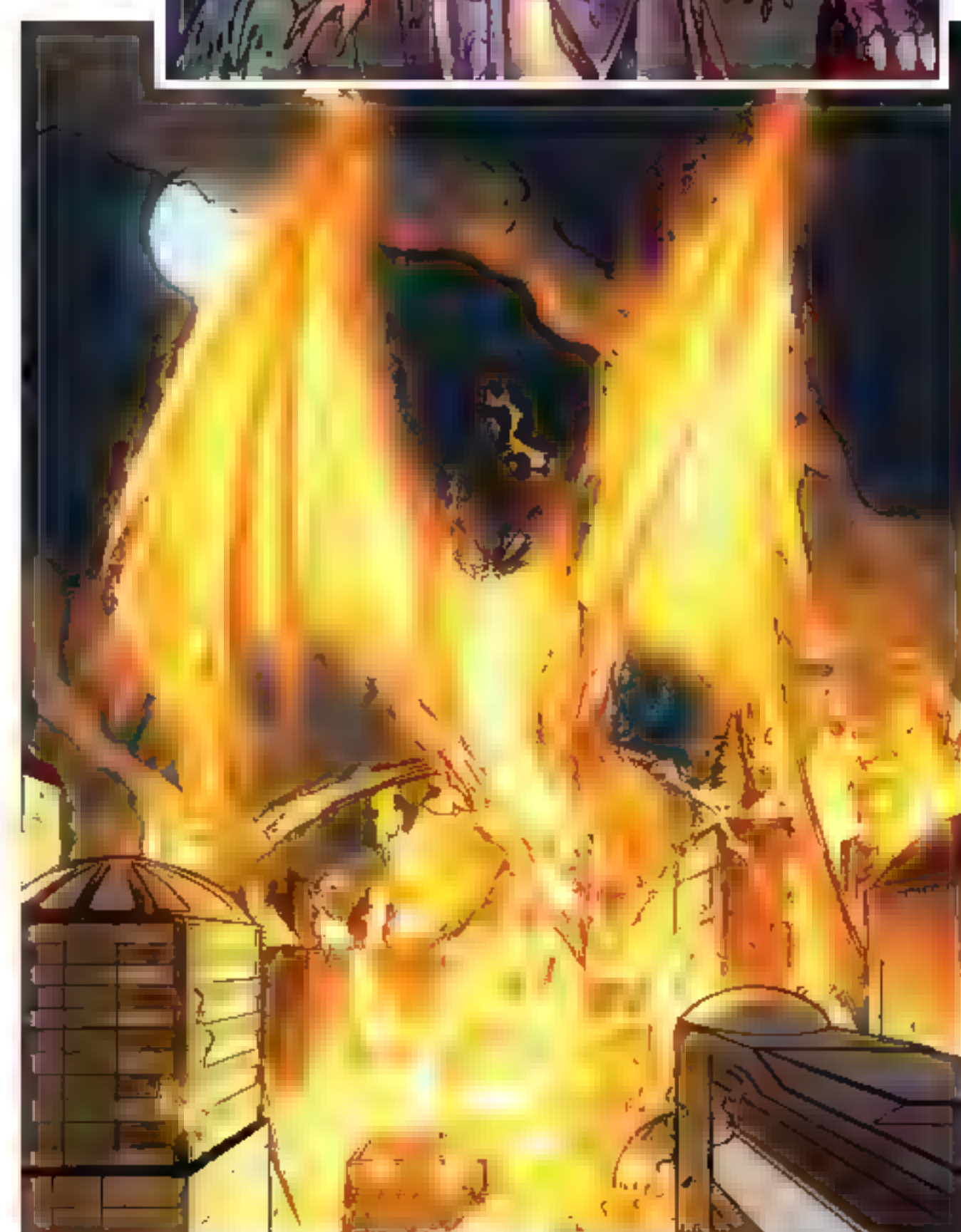


In the Everlands, Grace is haunted by dark visions that eventually manifest themselves through her own flesh and blood as she is possessed by the chaos of magic itself, becoming a harbinger of doom for all of existence. She kills a den of dragons, as well as their Rahtumi handler, then sets about to wreak destruction upon the world. Grace travels the globe, tapping into powerful epicenters of magical energy to revive her own special minions—four powerful elemental dragons. They shall be her means of devastation.

Knowing the kind of threat they are facing, Malikai forms an uneasy alliance with the cruel and vengeful King Sarin of the Everlands, and they work with Benoist to develop a series of technological weapons that enhance their magical powers, as it may be the only way to stop Grace. Together, they confront her and her elemental dragons, but seem overmatched especially when Grace herself transforms into a giant creature of Chaos.



Knowing that the Chaos feeds off the magic, Malikai sees the only possible way to defeat it might be to overpower it. Malikai uses his magic, amped up by cyber-technology, to flood Grace with tremendous amounts of energy. It's too much even for her and she explodes, the blast decimating several city blocks.



In the aftermath, Malikai refuses to accept the cost of victory. Just as Grace didn't accept his death, he will not abandon her. Malikai makes the same difficult journey that Grace did, venturing into the realm beyond death to fight for Grace's soul. There, he faces Ethu, the god of chaos. He is not a match to battle such a force. Just before his ultimate defeat, Malikai is aided by another god, the god of order—Ansu. The war amongst the gods is epic and beyond comprehension. In the end, Malikai and Grace find themselves back amongst their friends. They have survived.



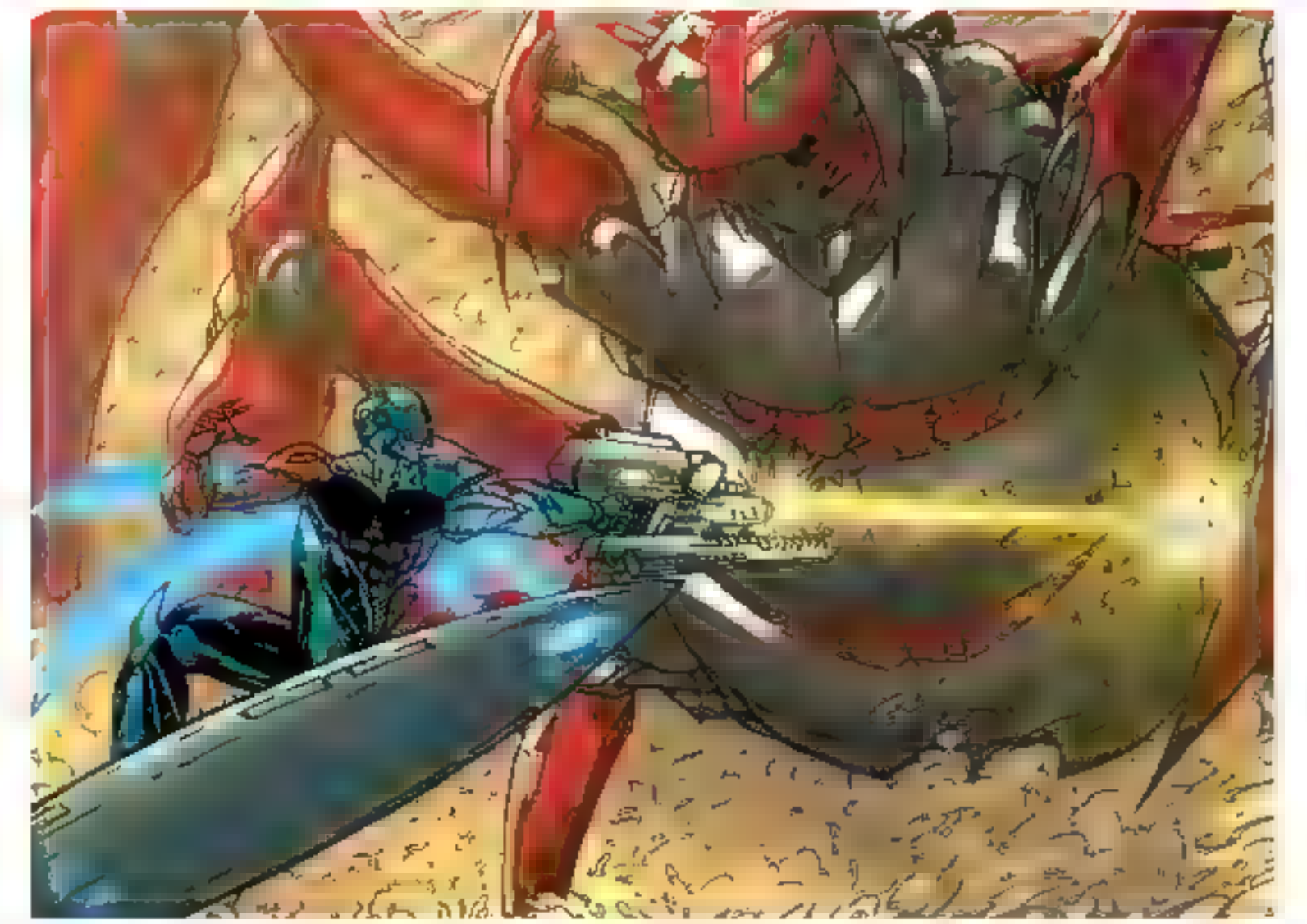
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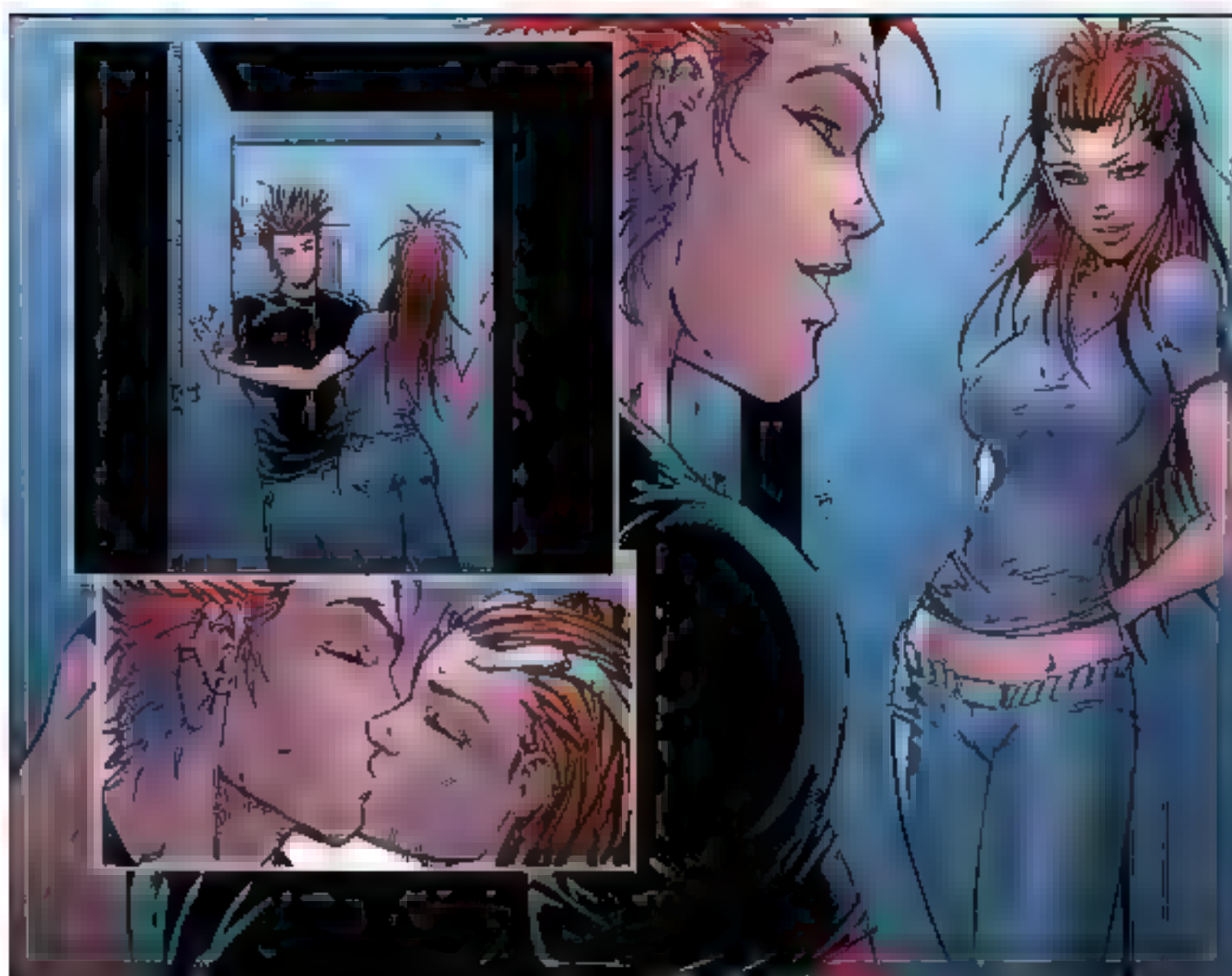
# SOULFIRE Volume 5 — “Pandemonium”



Malikai and his friends travel to Paris so that PJ can take part in a secret competition of cybernetic achievement—a battle royale called Pandemonium. There, PJ meets and falls for another combatant, a girl named Alori who possesses an enormous mech suit of might called Tinderbox. She beats him in a preliminary round, but is gracious enough to let PJ buy her a drink afterwards.



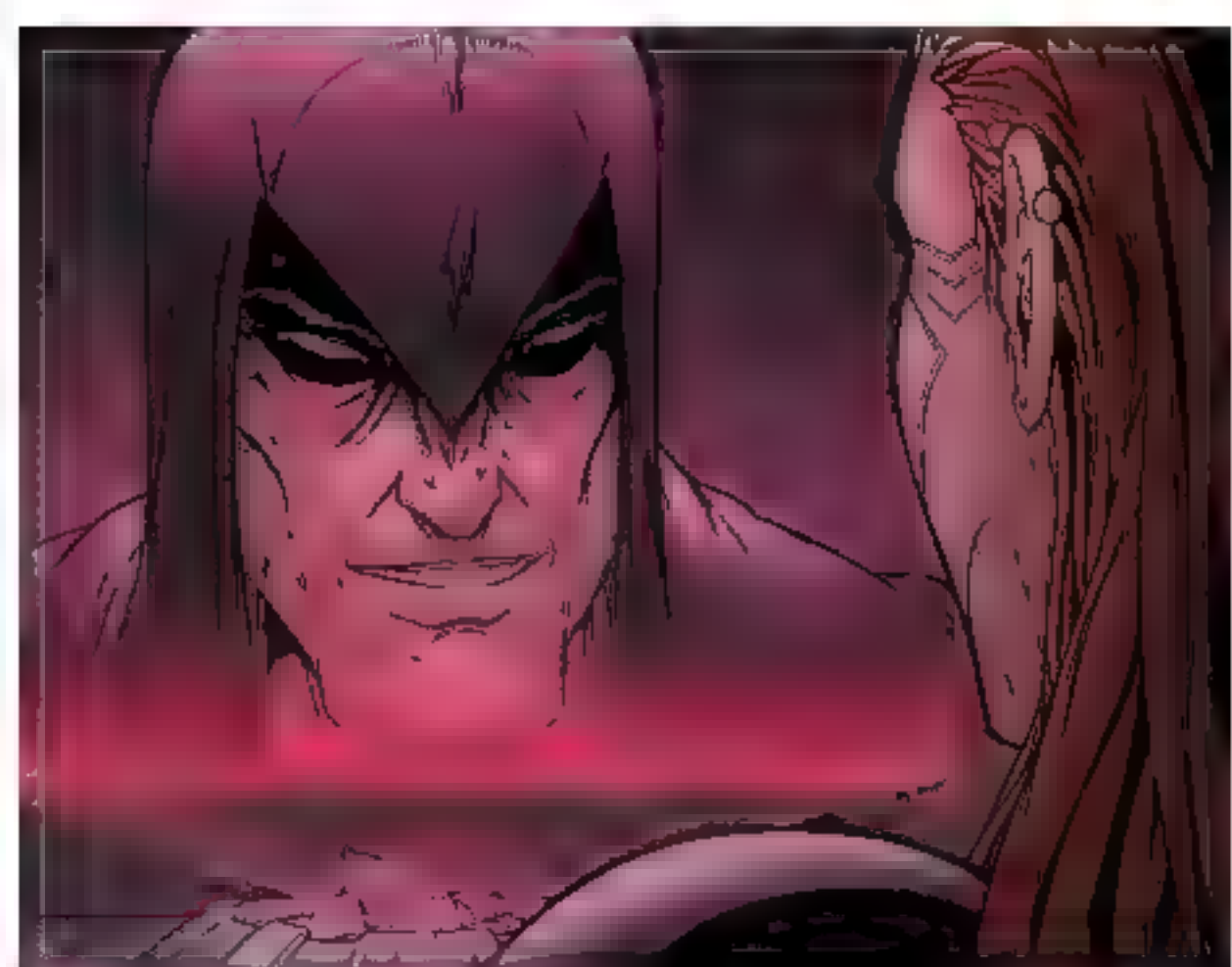
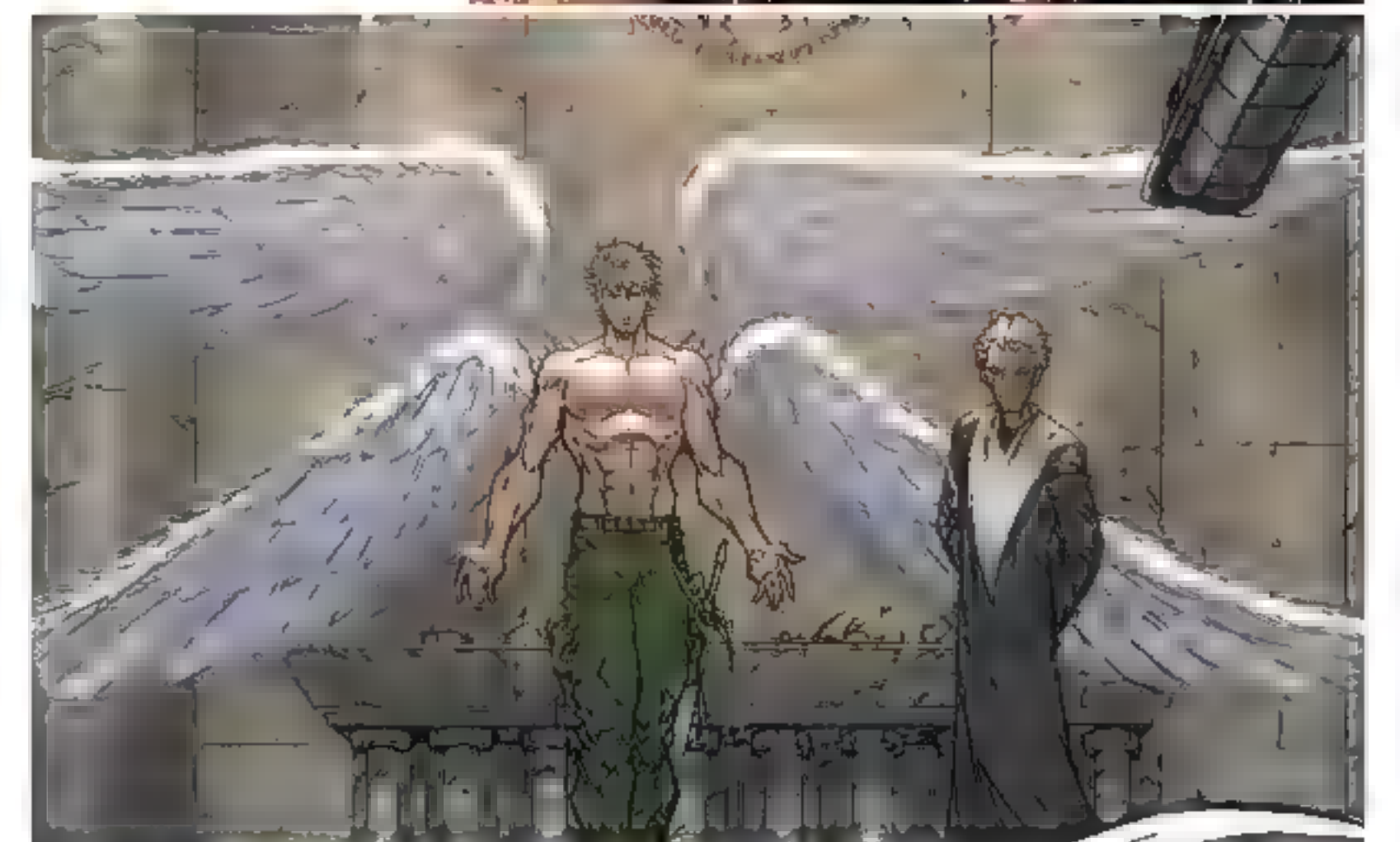
Malikai and Sonia try to enjoy the sight of the city, but get drawn into a ruckus between agitated citizens and members of a cult-like group called Gabriel's Voice, comprised of people who yearn to be connected to the secret life force they believe exists (the hidden magic that Malikai knows all too well). Malikai befriends one of its member, a kind man named Henric. Sonia is annoyed that Malikai won't just stay out of it, but that he feels compelled to help. Elsewhere, Grace has a magical encounter of her own, meeting Vanyss, a woman that is struggling to come to terms with the gargoyle-like features manifested by her connection to magic.



Back in America, Rainier has experienced a spiritual breakthrough of his own. For ages, he has tried to use technology to achieve his means, but now realizes that pure magic is the way to go. He is determined to reconnect with his ancestral roots and will regain his own true form. With the help of Jayden and the mercenary Blackjack, Rainier is kidnapping those with apparent magical abilities and siphoning off their power for his own purposes.

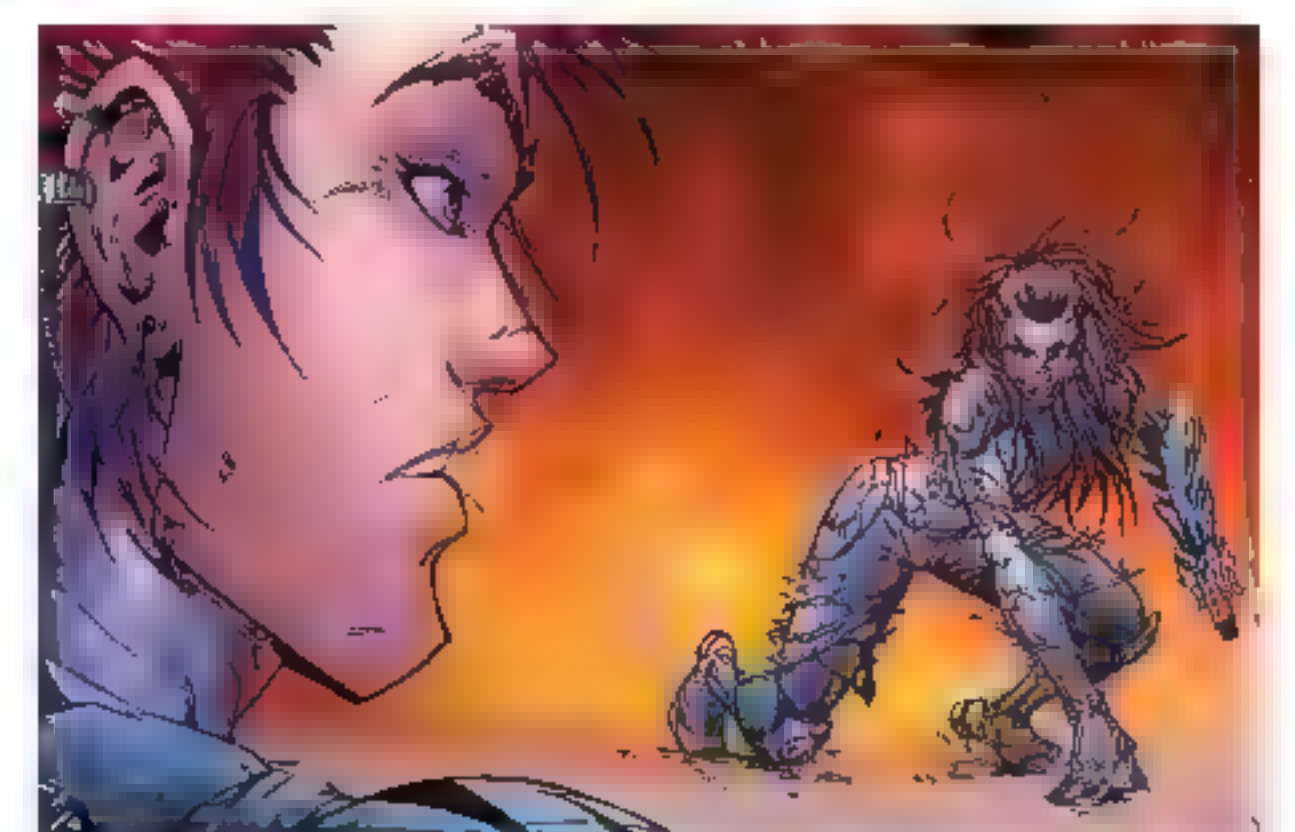


As PJ continues to compete both for victory in the arena and for Alori's affection, Benoist discovers some troublesome clues that point to Abel, a devious and brilliant scientist who once worked for Rainier, helping to develop his giant mechanical dragon. Unknown to them, Abel is in league with Alori, who is only using PJ to get to Benoist. Abel wants to show him and everyone else who is truly the best.

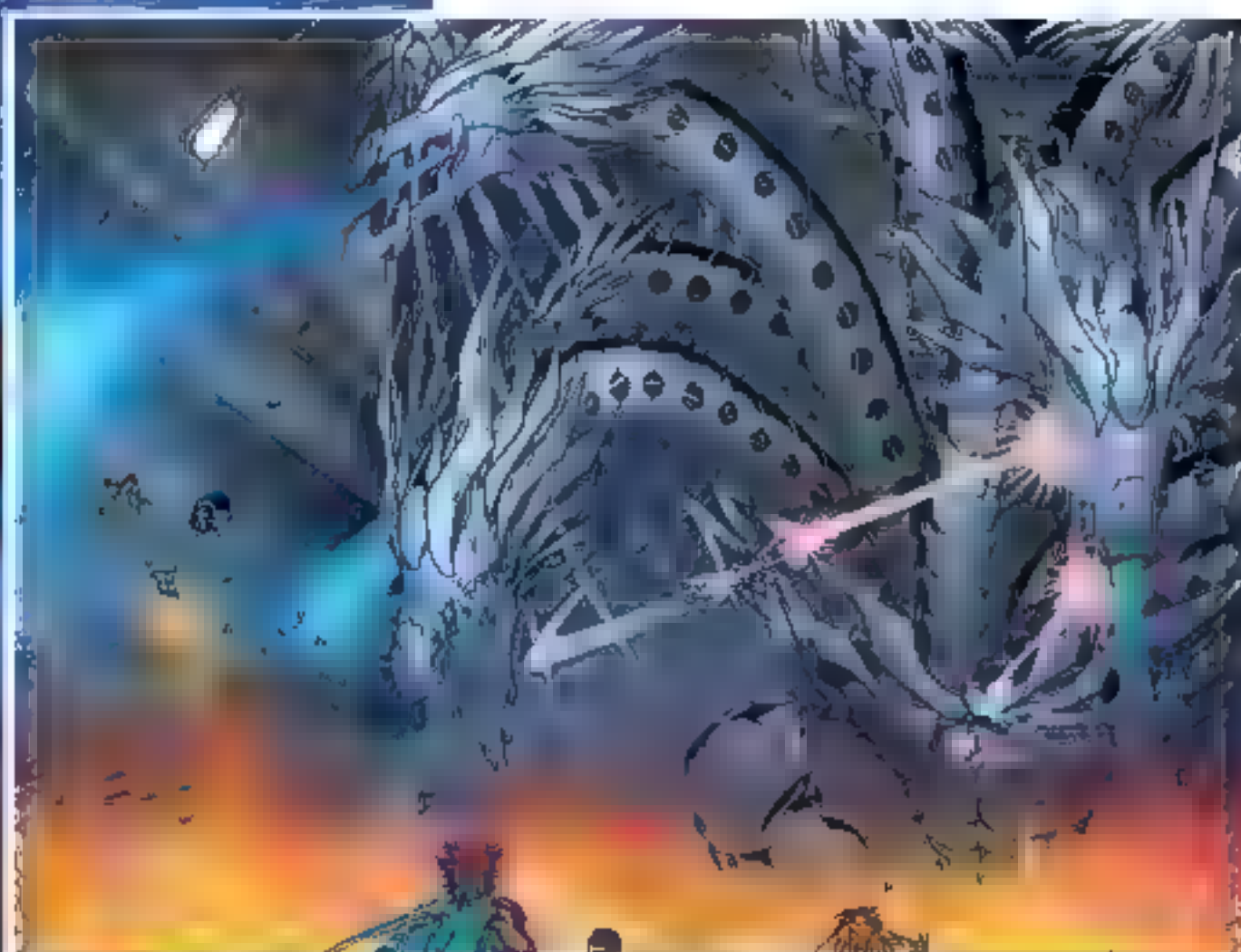
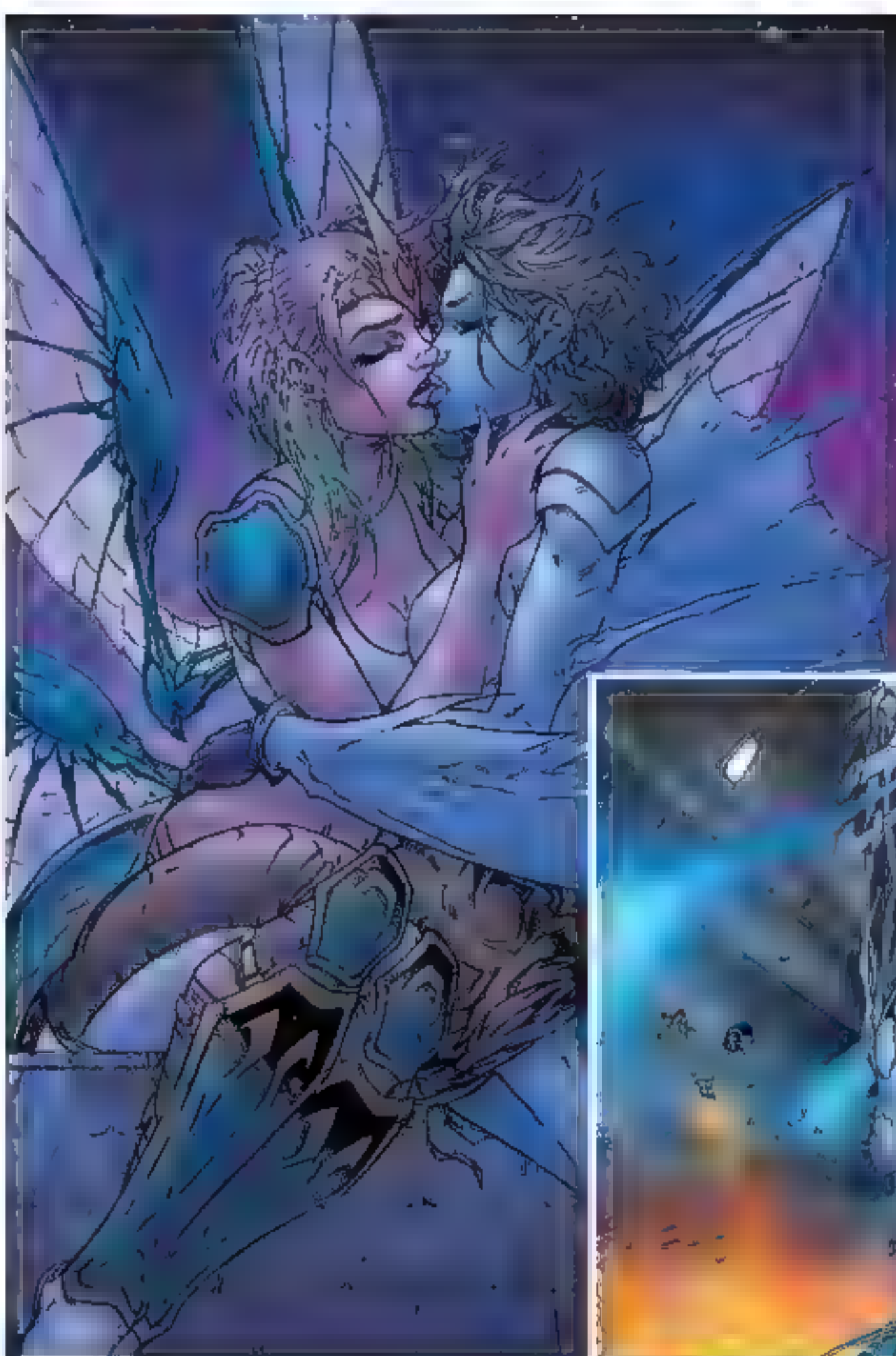


The mood at Gabriel's Voice takes a turn when a seemingly magical angel descends upon the scene. Michael is everything Henric and the others have been waiting for—proof of magic's existence. And, Michael is all too eager to embrace his role of messiah, much to the chagrin of Malikai. When Michael's presence leads to a riot, Malikai is forced to step in to stop people from getting hurt. In the course of action, he confronts Michael and exposes him to be a fraud, tearing his artificial wings from his back. Instead of being thankful for his efforts, Henric and the others are despondent and hostile. Malikai took the only thing they had—hope.

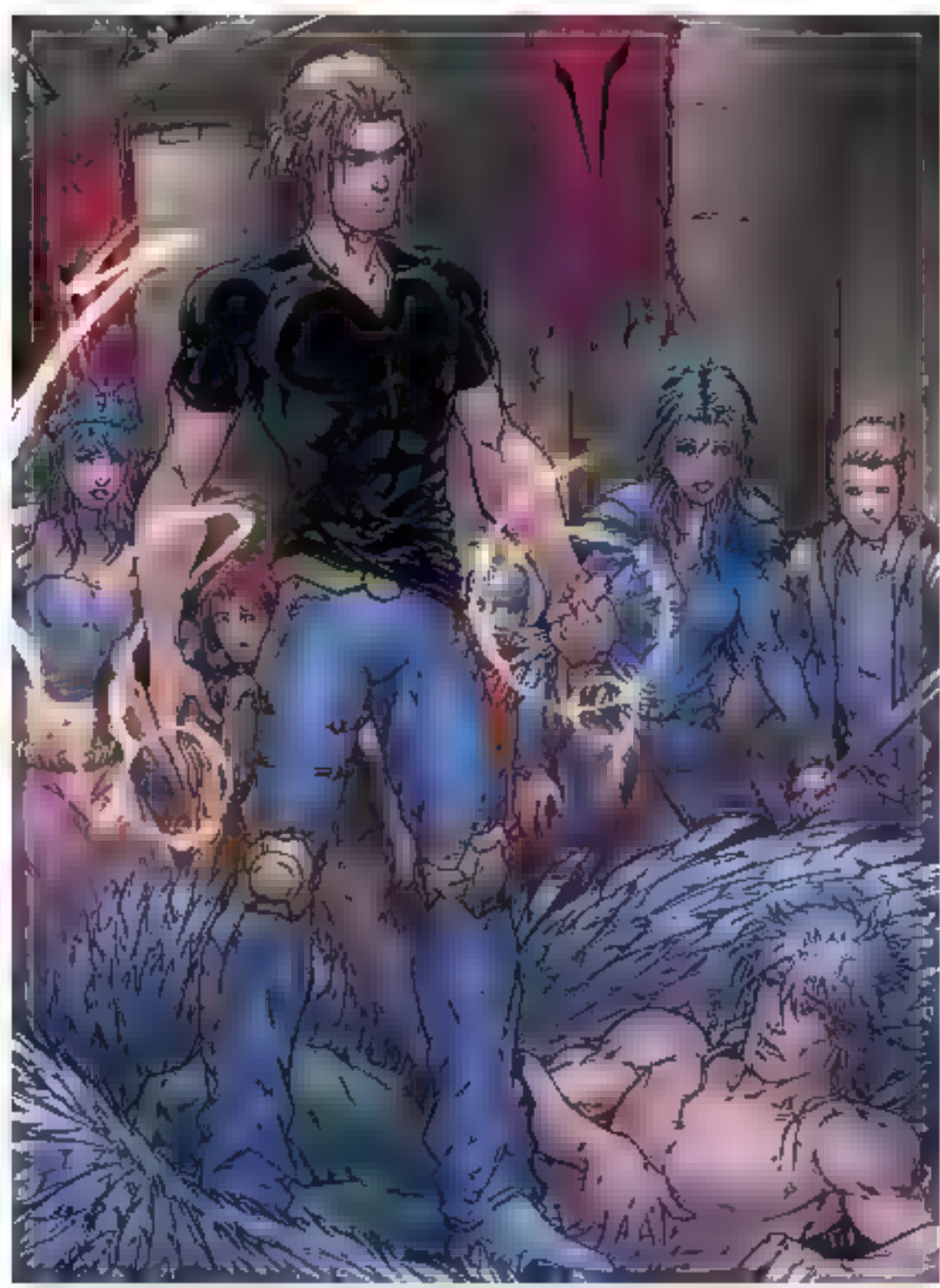
Rainier finally undergoes his own transformation, using the magical energy he siphoned to rejuvenate his true form—that of the Naitali. Suspicious of his efforts, Jayden sneaks into his inner sanctum and discovers that Rainier has been holding Cole prisoner, using his power to siphon the magic for himself. She tries to rescue Cole, but he turns on her and offers Jayden to Rainier, to serve in his place. Rainier agrees and Jayden ends up in chains, while Cole leaves free as a bird.



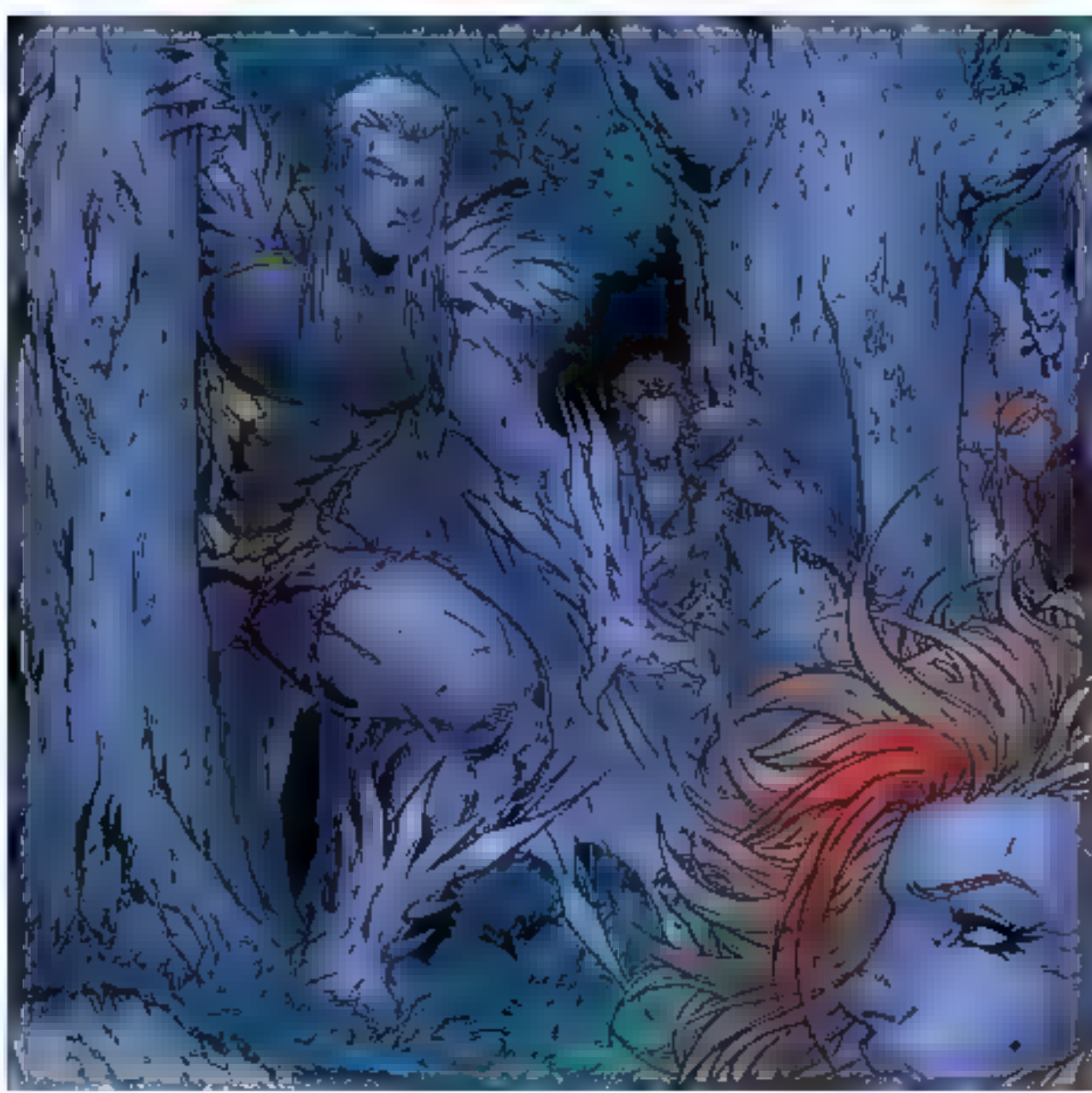
Abel finally makes his move, attacking Benoist at the arena. PJ sees Alori under siege and goes to her aid, only to learn that she was not only a spy this entire time, but that she was also fake in another way—she's an android. Abel makes a big spectacle unleashing his latest creation—a hydra—a gigantic multi-headed dragon. A true battle royale ensues, as Benoist faces off against Abel, PJ fights Alori, and Grace, Malikai, and Vanyss work together to destroy the huge dragon monstrosity of Abel's design. They literally bring the roof down in order to win the battle.







Afterwards, Malikai takes Grace and Vanyss to see Henric at the Gabriel's Voice temple. He cannot give him magic of his own, but at least he can give him back his sense of hope. Before leaving, Vanyss says goodbye to Grace. While there is a definite love between the two, Vanyss feels like her journey must take her elsewhere. She watches Grace leave with the others, and then is addressed by someone who shares more in common with her—the newly transformed Rainier. He is gathering descendants of the Naitali, rebuilding his tribe, and Vanyss belongs with her own. She belongs with him.



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# SOULFIRE Volume 6 — “Future Shock”



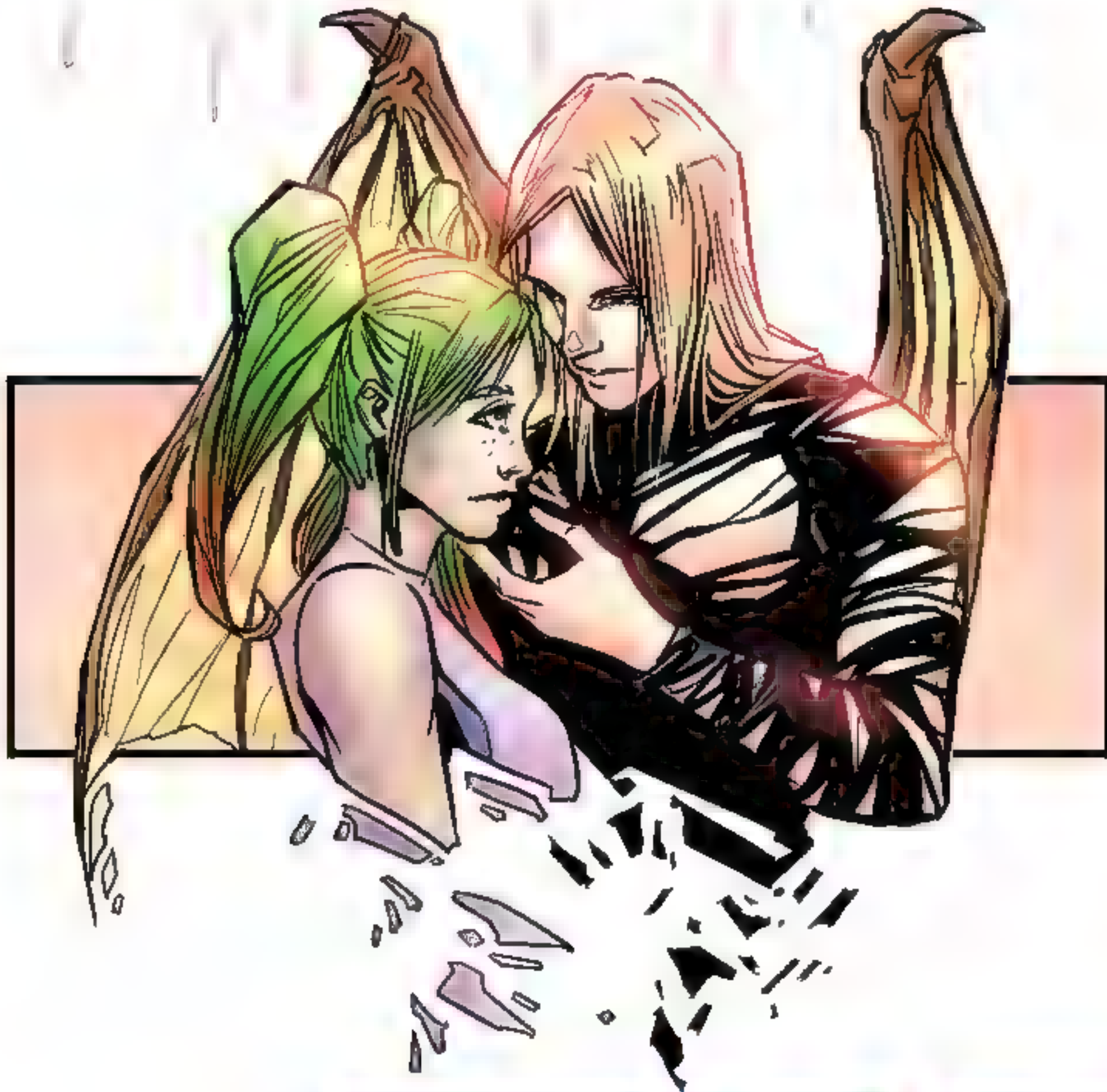
Following the universe-shattering events in Aspen Universe: Revelations, the world of Soulfire is not what it was. Malikai is still the Samusara, still the spark of magic, but this time around his protectors include Rainier and Onyx. Living a life of luxury, thanks to his benefactor, Malikai is unaware of the lies and deception keeping him in the dark about who he is and what he can do. PJ, Benoist, and Sonia are strangers to him, as is Grace. However, the ancient winged-warrior sets about to change that by opening his eyes to his true potential and the devious motivation behind Rainier's supposed generosity.

Eventually, Malikai discovers how Rainier is using him as a power source, hoarding the magic for his own endeavors. To make things even more complicated, Malikai makes an even bigger revelation, as he realizes that this universe, this timeline, has been formed through interference.

This isn't how things are supposed to be.



Torn by his feelings towards his friends and his connection to this “other” world, Malikai makes the impossible choice to set things right. Holding Sonia close, Malikai apologies as their entire existence is wiped away forever. Back in his real timeline, Malikai is reunited with his friends and with the help of Kamea's guiding spirit, his own mind is put to rest as the memory of that lost reality is forgotten altogether. The universe is set right once more...for everyone.



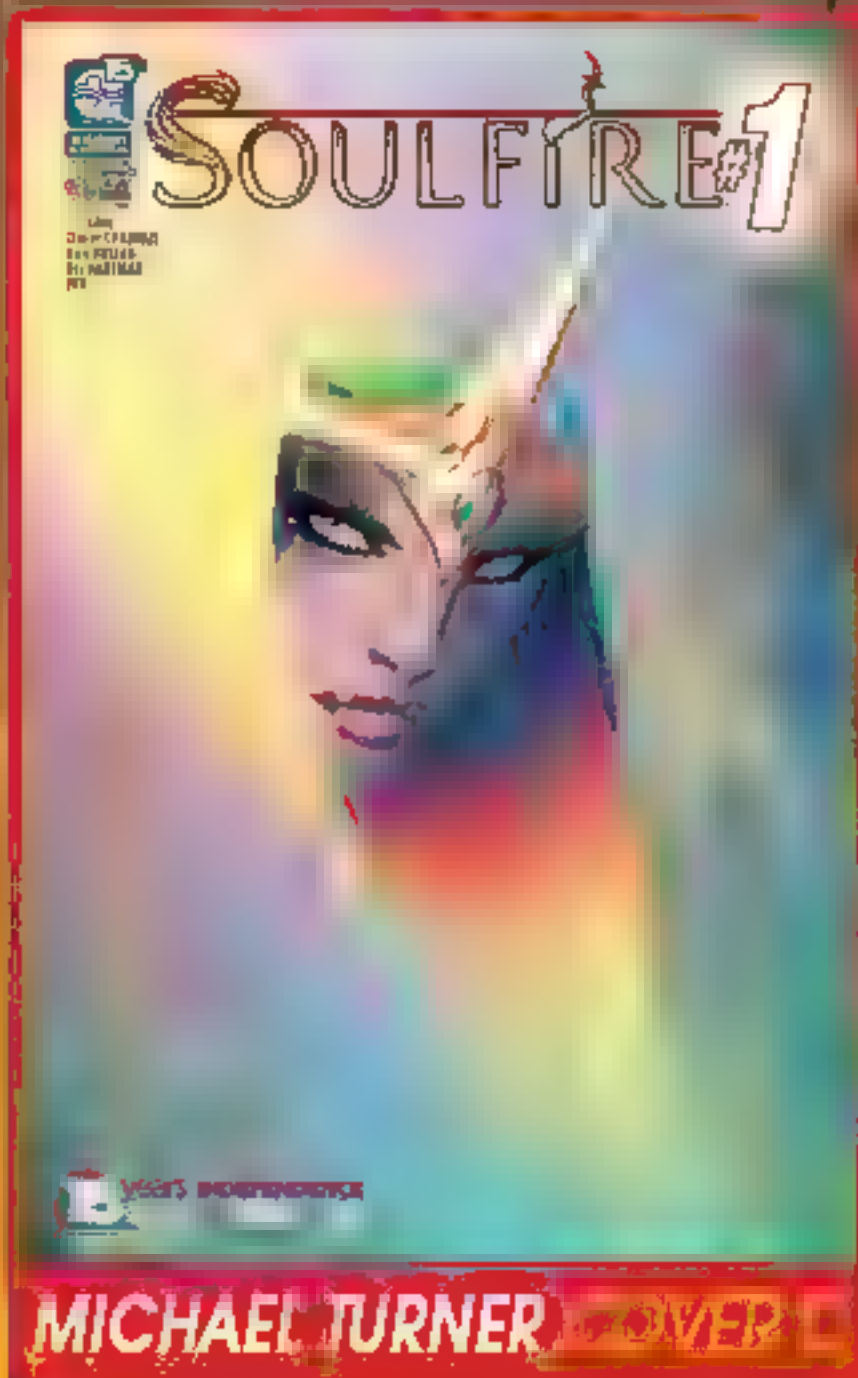
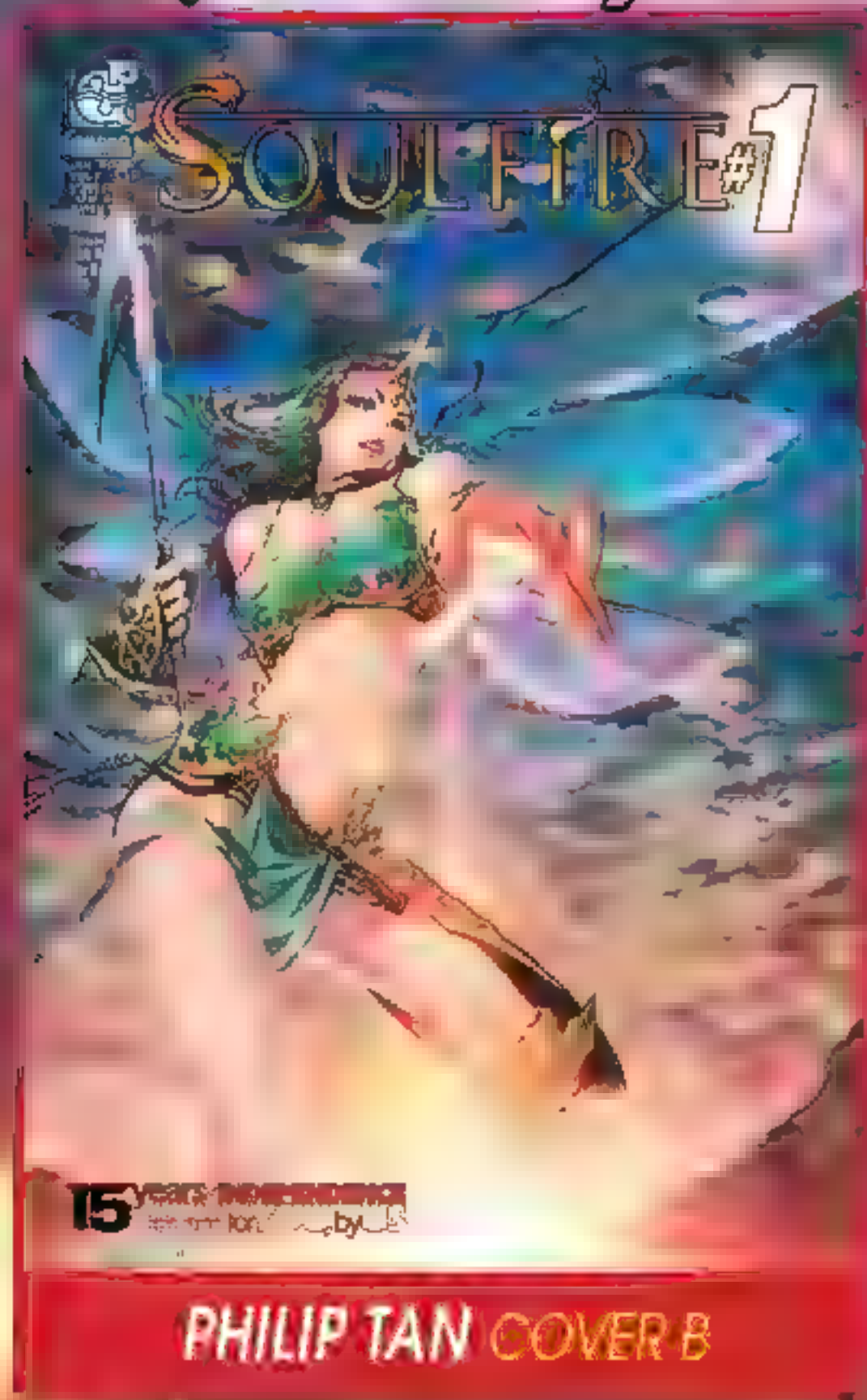
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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

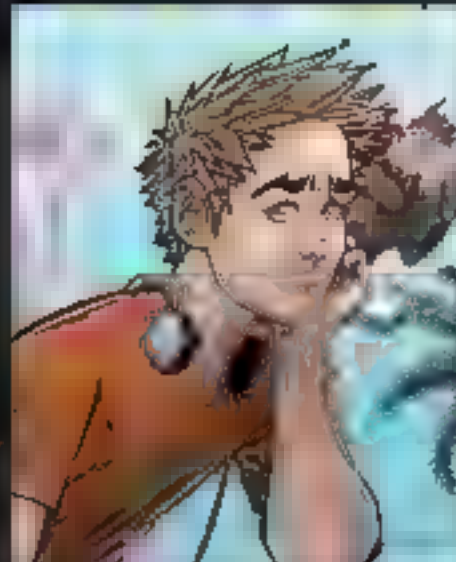
As Theodore Langstrom faced the everyday challenges of school at Maxwell High, he soon realized that his adolescence was only the tip of the iceberg. Theo discovered the voices in his head weren't a figment of his imagination, but rather Ange and Dev, his conscience counterparts from the world of Perspecta, a realm encompassing all of the human emotions experienced on Earth.

Along with his friends, Thom and Kiori, Langstrom was quickly pulled into a war between a powerful and villainous Nefarian exile, Ember Silva, and the province of Elysia, their Perspectan counterparts that spilled over into the human world.

Believing they had vanquished Ember and her What-If-Mafia's plan to overthrow Perspecta, Theo returned from summer vacation only to learn that Perspecta was in fact, still in danger. The realm of emotions was under threat from Ember once again, using her monstrous henchman, Slive, in order to demolish the Elysian leadership. However, in Perspecta with the help of all of his allies, Theo was able to tap into his courage power to finally defeat Ember and return everything presumably back to normal...

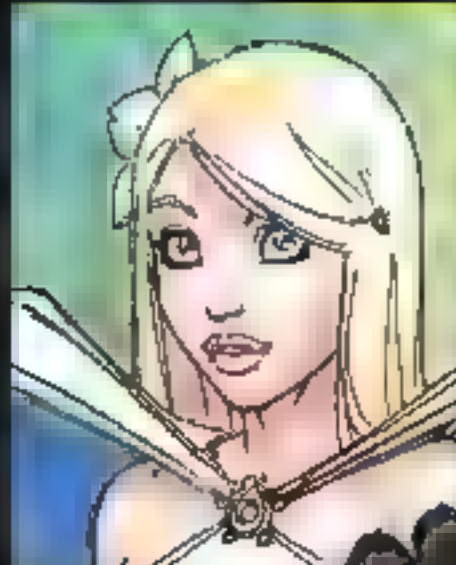
## SHRUGGED THE MAJOR PLAYERS:

### Theo Langstrom



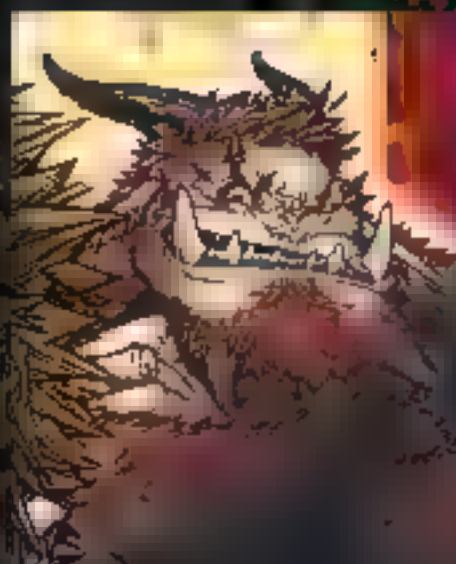
A high school kid that's into skateboarding, hanging out with his closest friends and having fun, Theo Langstrom was the prototypical adolescent teen—until everything in his life changed. After learning that the voices inside his head, Ange and Dev, were actual manifestations of his conscience, his world quickly turned upside down. The young teen was pulled into the center of a war between Elysia and Nefario, two divided cities in the emotion world of Perspecta, and Theo became the catalyst for defeating the realm's greatest threat—the fiery Ember Silva.

### Ange



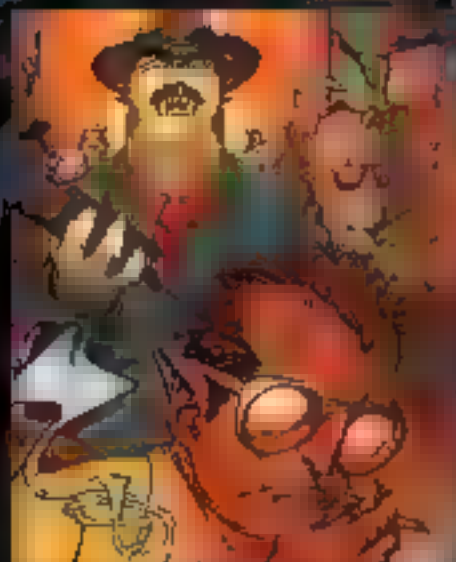
Oftentimes, Ange plays the heavy to Dev's more lighthearted approach, but much like her Nefarian counterpart, her true intentions always remain genuine. Ange is the sensible and composed Elysian part of Theo's conscience. She has been at the center of both of Theo's struggles in Perspecta and of course, in high school as well.

### Dev



Representing Theo's more brash and juvenile side, Dev is not only a central part of Theo's conscience as a teenager, but has also been thrust into the action himself in more ways than one. While the loveable Nefarian beast many times acts before thinking, his loyalty and dedication to Theo is never in doubt.

### What If Mafia



Ember Silva's wild and wacky—and even dangerous—henchmen have been an integral part of both her attempts to overthrow Perspecta. Representing the true uncertainty and zaniness of countless human emotions, this pint-sized but potent posse is not to be taken lightly.

### Ember Silva



Ember's history contains a tragic loss of her Earth life and normal suburban existence, which set in motion her eventual rise as the leader of a rebellion in Perspecta that led to war and major destruction in both Elysia and Nefario. Her command of the deadly Slive and the fear creatures, in addition to the troublemaking group known as the What If Mafia, have made her a powerful adversary to anyone in Perspecta—and Earth as well, as Theo and friends have learned the hard way.

### Thom



Theo's steadfast best friend, bro, and all-around good guy, Thom has journeyed with Theo on both of his adventures into Perspecta along with their mutual friend, Kiori. Thom's wisecracking, quick wit has also served to aid Theo and pals during some of their most challenging moments, cementing his status as a loyal confidante to Theo.

### Kiori



A friend of Theo from very early on, Kiori is perhaps Theo's most trusted and loyal person in his life. She also has joined along with Theo and Thom in their quest to balance the world of Perspecta in order to save the Earth world. Although, Kiori has remained a consistent part of Theo's adventures, she is not entirely free of her own challenges in life, and she keeps a special notebook of sketches to keep her mind occupied when things get tough.

### Carrie



Maxwell High's preeminent cheerleader hottie, Carrie was Theo's original school crush. Theo would eventually befriend Carrie, and she even found herself drawn into the fight in Perspecta and aiding the butterfly, Kiriella. Carrie's path has crossed several times with Theo's, and if history is any indication, it won't be the last time, either.

### Walker



Theo's high school arch-nemesis turned ally, Walker was your classic teenage bully until joining the group on their first venture in Perspecta unwillingly. Although Walker and Theo had their differences, the pair eventually found common ground and has shared a collective respect for each other since—but it doesn't mean Walker won't still find humor in the occasional pranking of Theo from time to time.

*Shrugged created by Michael Turner & Frank Mastromauro*

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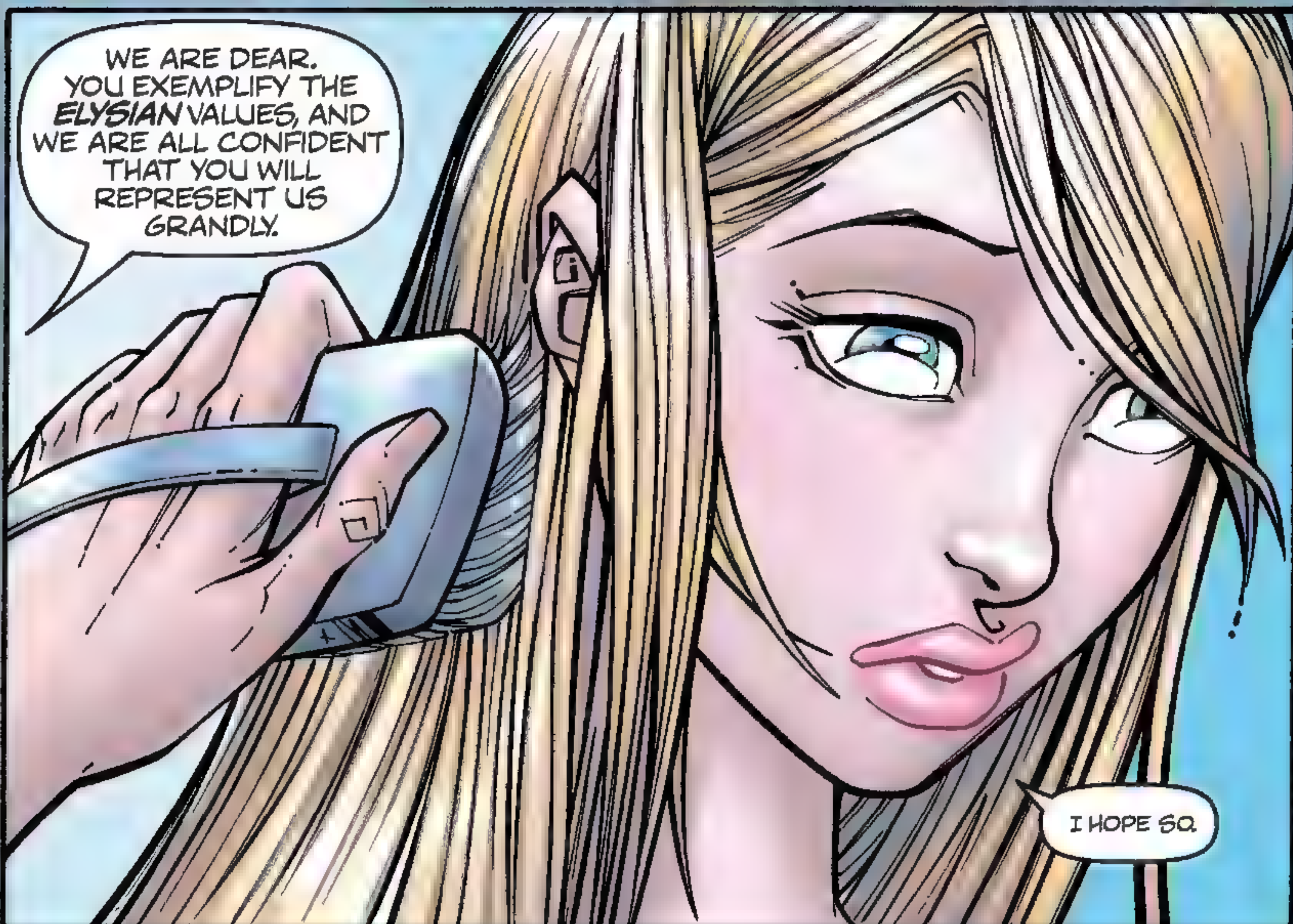
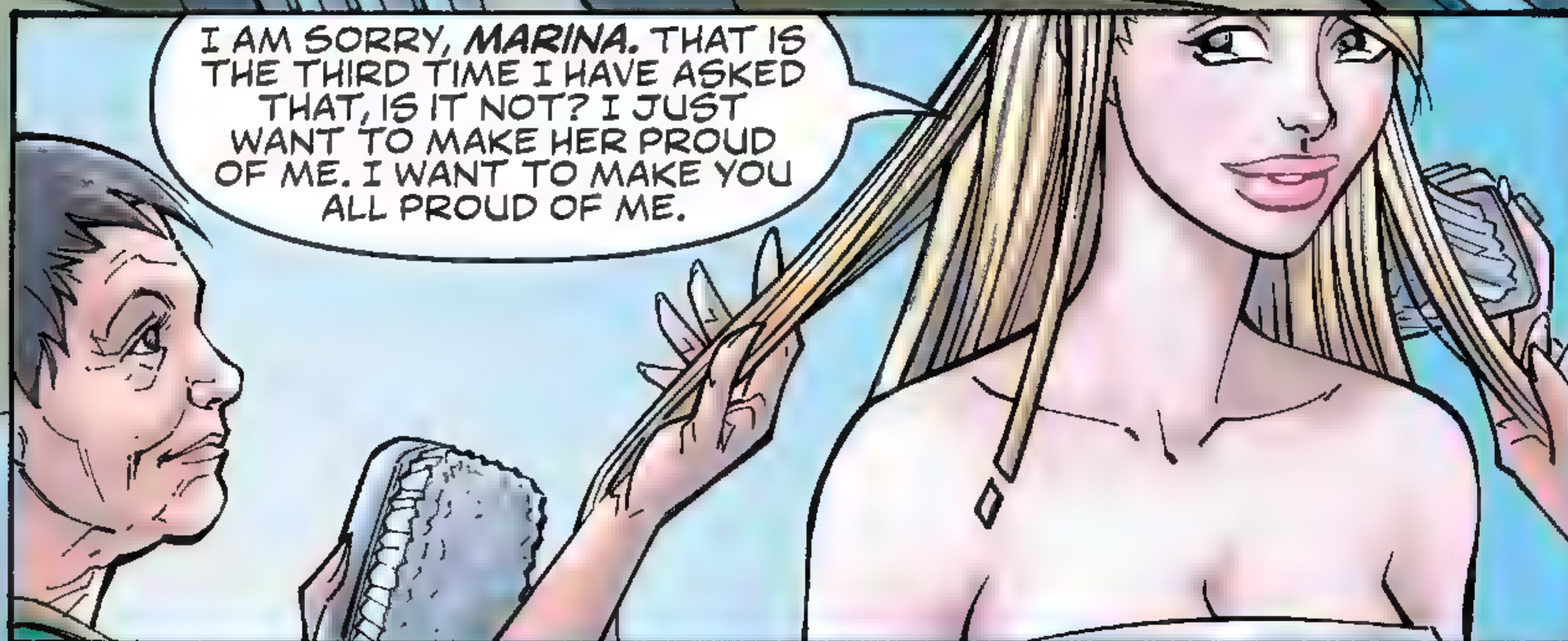
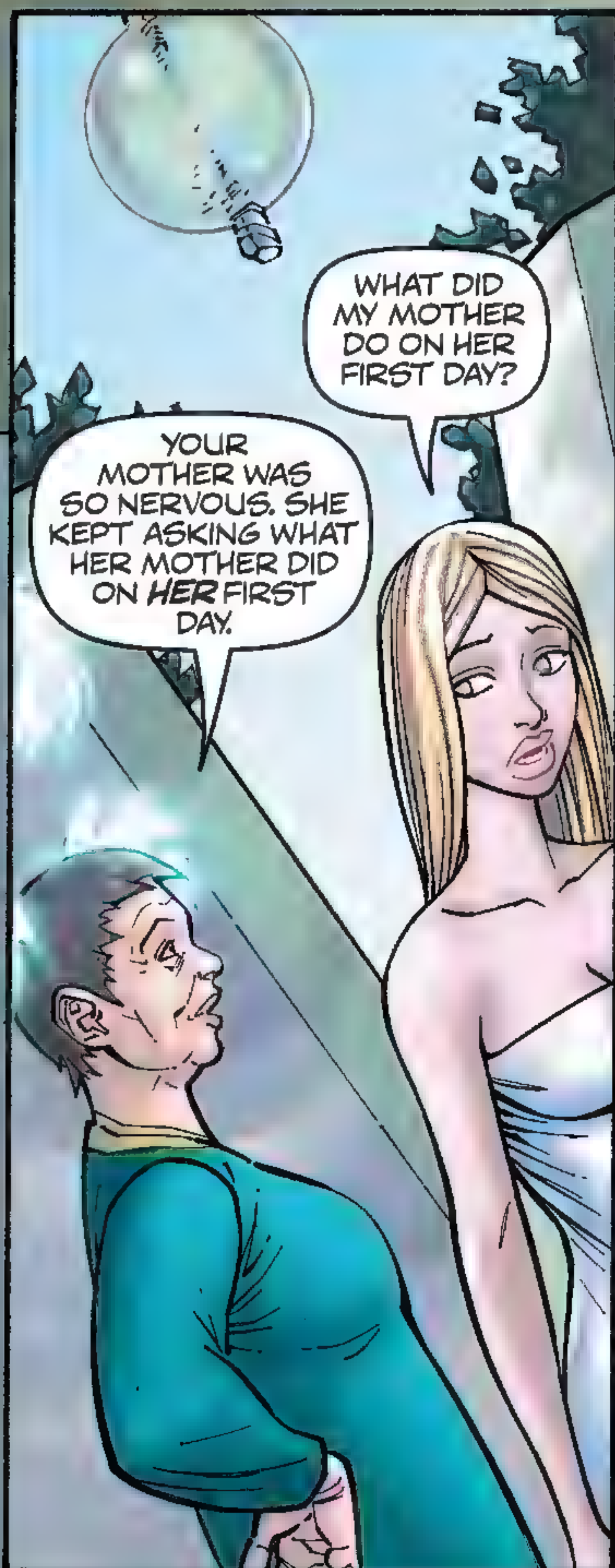
17 YEARS AGO.

ELYSIA.

THERE, THERE CHILD. YOU WILL BE QUITE DIVINE.

DO YOU THINK I WILL BE WORTHY OF MY ANCESTORS?

NOW ANGE, JUST REMEMBER THE PRINCIPLES WE CHERISH AND YOU WILL IMBUE THOSE WITHIN YOUR **SELECTED HOST** QUITE WONDERFULLY.





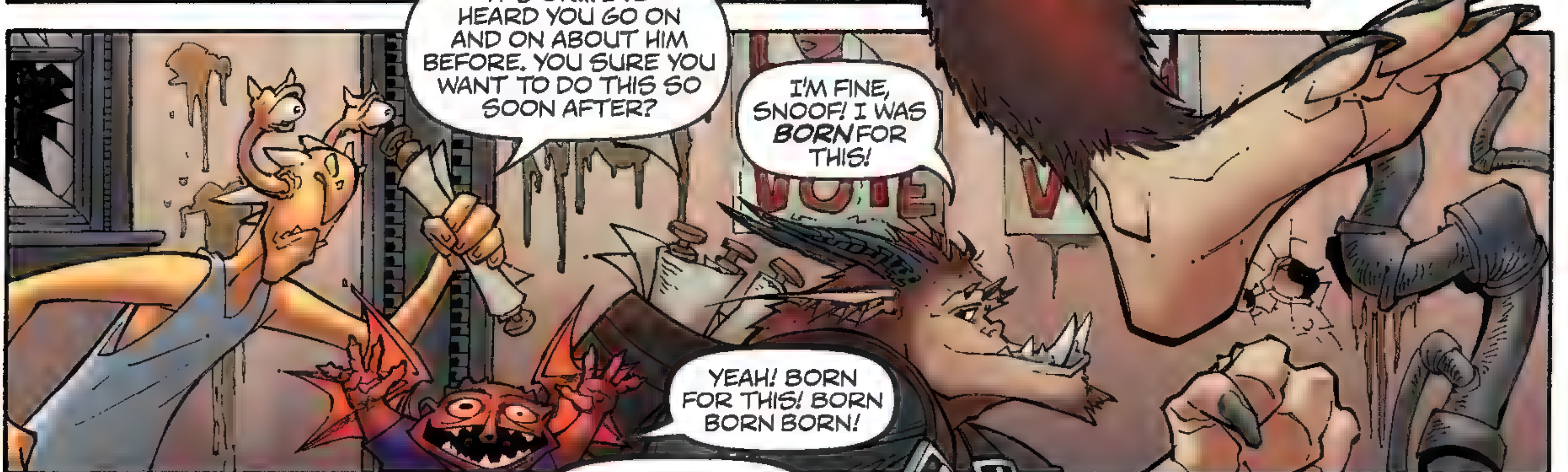


WAIT UP! SO WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU MADE A DECISION, DEV?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SNOOF? I MAKE THEM ALL THE TIME... WHAT TO EAT, WHEN TO GET UP, WHO I HANG OUT WITH--

NO, NOT FOR YOU... SOMETHING IMPORTANT... FOR THEM... THE IMPORTANT ONES... THE CHOSEN HOST.

WELL, I GUESS I HAVEN'T YET... NOT REALLY. MY DAD TOLD ME ALL ABOUT HIS ONCE... BEFORE HE--



IT'S OK... I'VE HEARD YOU GO ON AND ON ABOUT HIM BEFORE. YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS SO SOON AFTER?

I'M FINE, SNOOF! I WAS BORN FOR THIS!

YEAH! BORN FOR THIS! BORN BORN BORN!

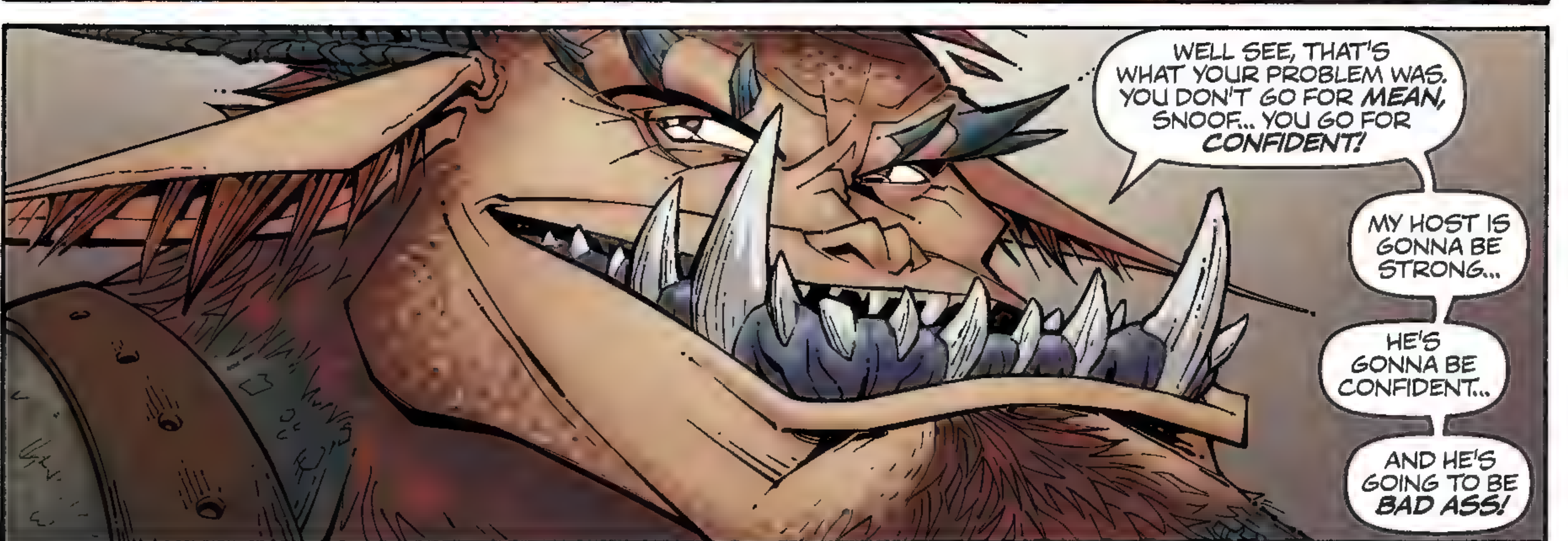


WE ALL WERE, DEV. BUT IT'S HARD. MY FIRST DIDN'T GO GOOD AT ALL.

GO GOOD!? WELL YOU MEAN?

MEAN IS WHAT HE WAS. YOUNG FREDERICK WAS AS MEAN AS I COULD MAKE HIM.

YEAH! MEAN FREDERICK! MEAN MEAN MEAN!



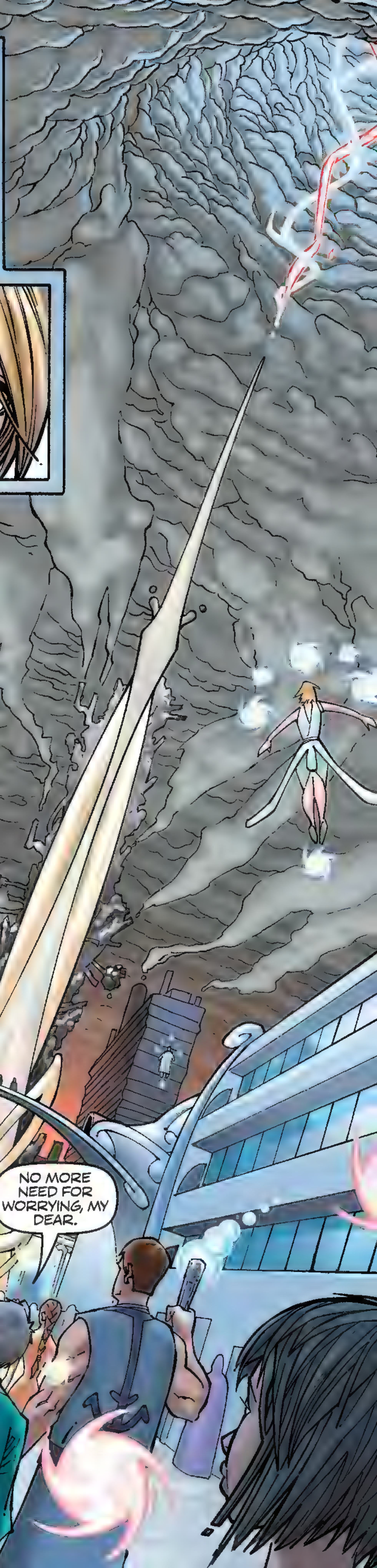
WELL SEE, THAT'S WHAT YOUR PROBLEM WAS. YOU DON'T GO FOR MEAN, SNOOF... YOU GO FOR CONFIDENT!

MY HOST IS GONNA BE STRONG...

HE'S GONNA BE CONFIDENT...

AND HE'S GOING TO BE BAD ASS!





NO MORE  
NEED FOR  
WORRYING, MY  
DEAR.





DUDE, I AM SO LATE!

YOU'RE ALWAYS LATE, DEV!

YEAH! LATE LATE LATE!



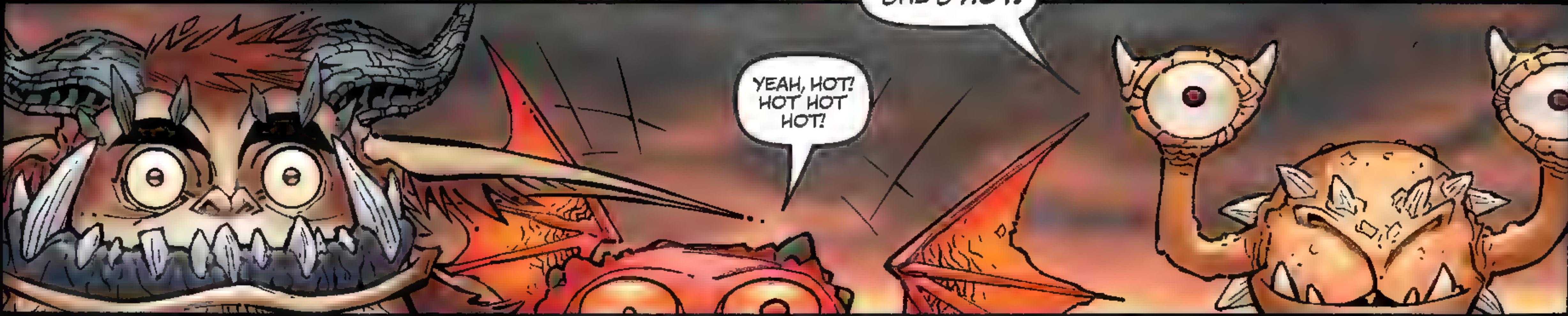
SHUT UP, GOO!



HOONK!

WHOOOAAHHHH!

I THINK SHE'S HOT!



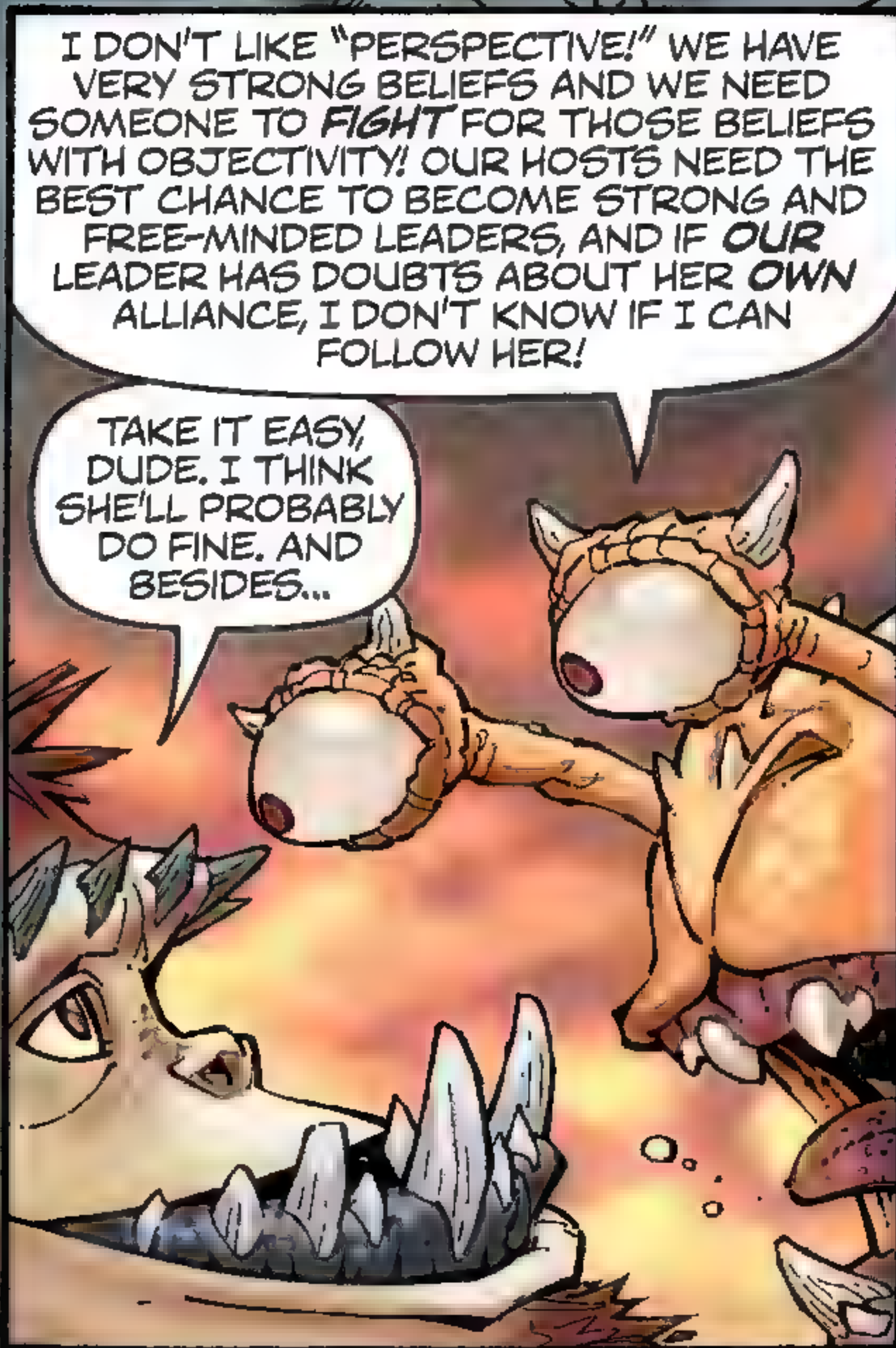
YEAH, HOT! HOT HOT HOT!



DIDN'T SHE USED TO BE AN "ELLY"?

I THINK SHE SWITCHED OVER AFTER THE STRIKE OF '71. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN TRUST A CONVERT...

I DON'T KNOW... I THINK SHE COULD HAVE A DISTINCT PERSPECTIVE THAT REALLY GIVES US AN EDGE WITH THE ELYSIANS.



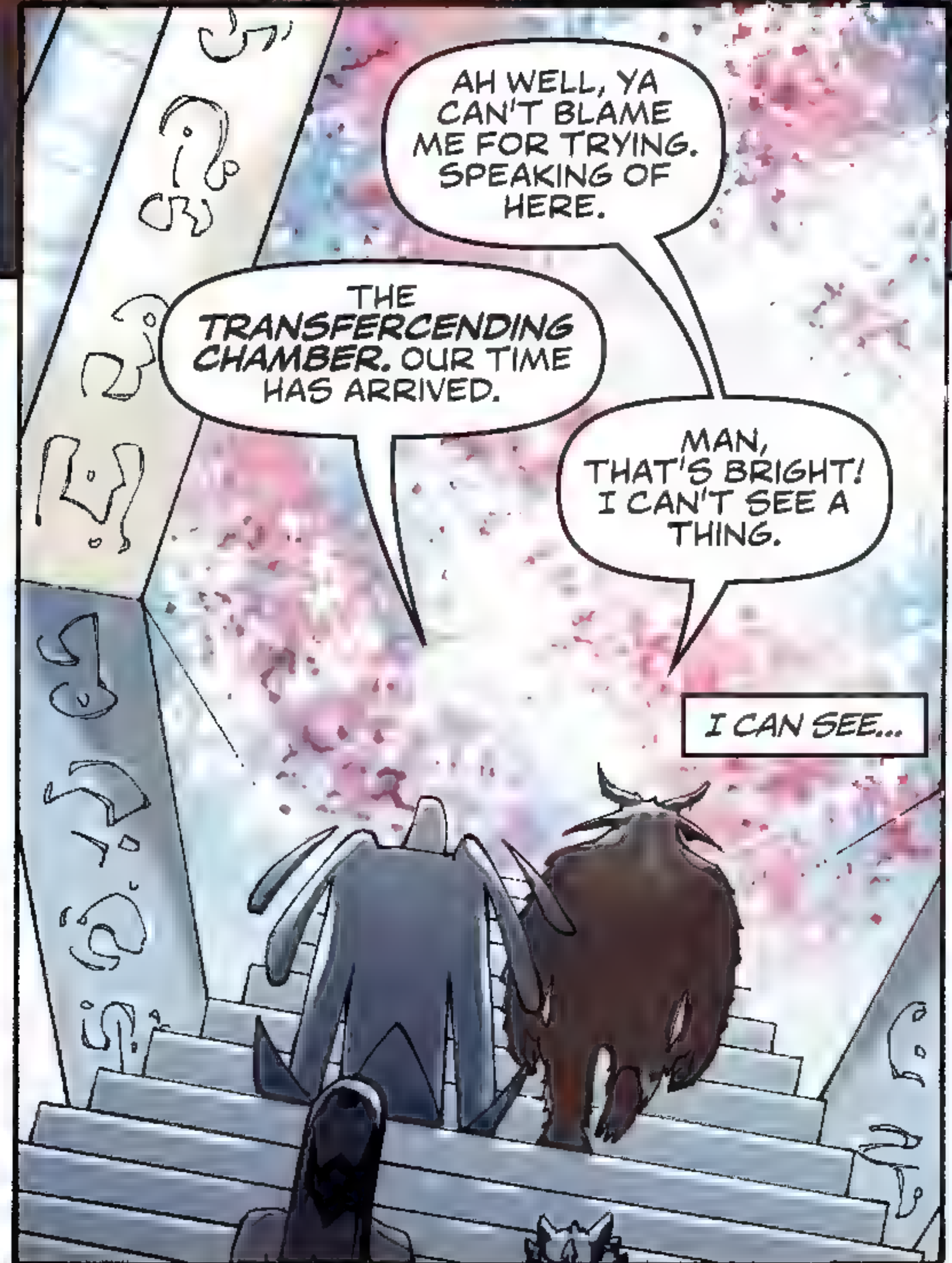
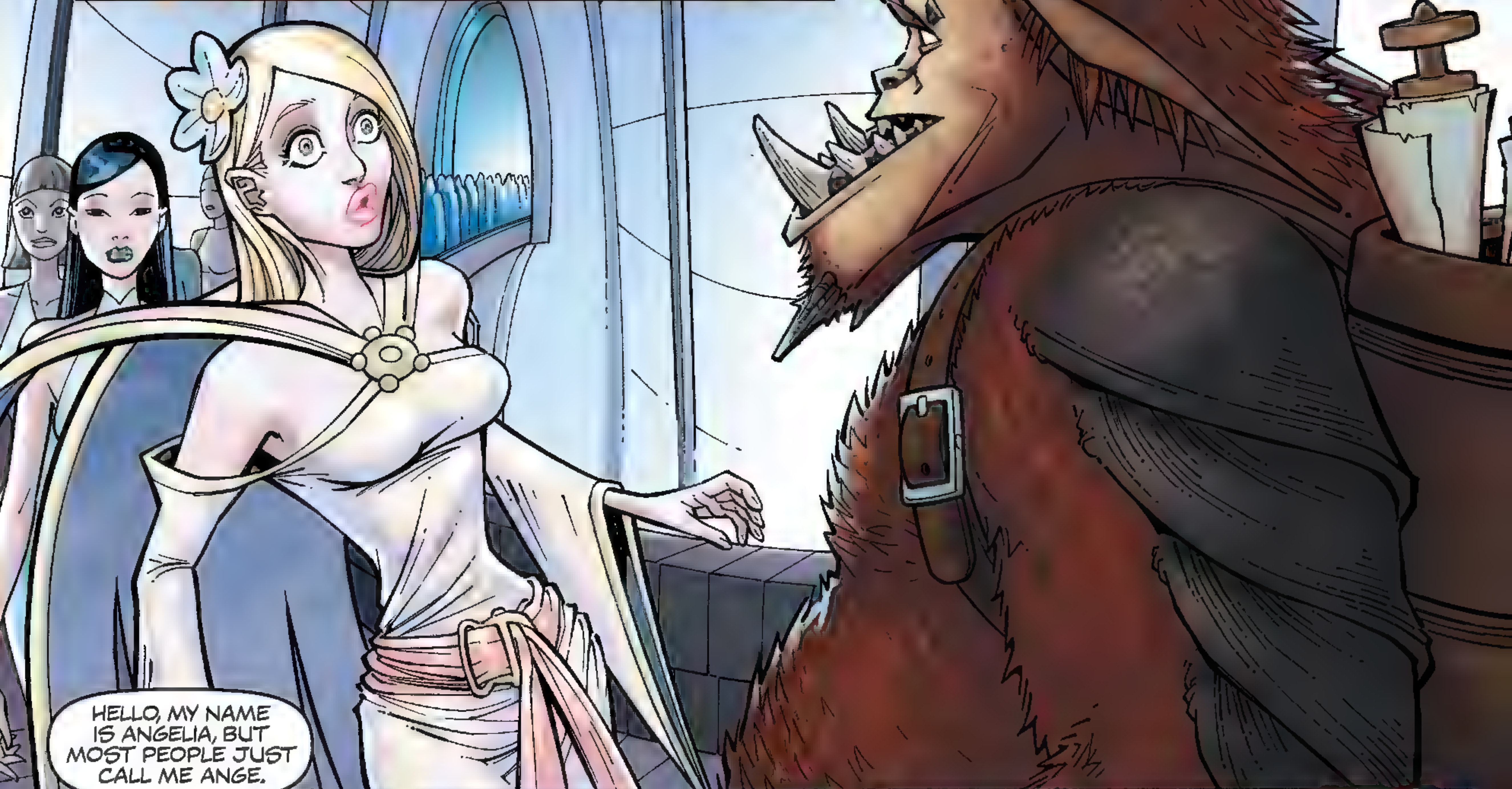
I DON'T LIKE "PERSPECTIVE!" WE HAVE VERY STRONG BELIEFS AND WE NEED SOMEONE TO FIGHT FOR THOSE BELIEFS WITH OBJECTIVITY! OUR HOSTS NEED THE BEST CHANCE TO BECOME STRONG AND FREE-MINDED LEADERS, AND IF OUR LEADER HAS DOUBTS ABOUT HER OWN ALLIANCE, I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN FOLLOW HER!

TAKE IT EASY, DUDE. I THINK SHE'LL PROBABLY DO FINE. AND BESIDES...



SHE IS HOT!

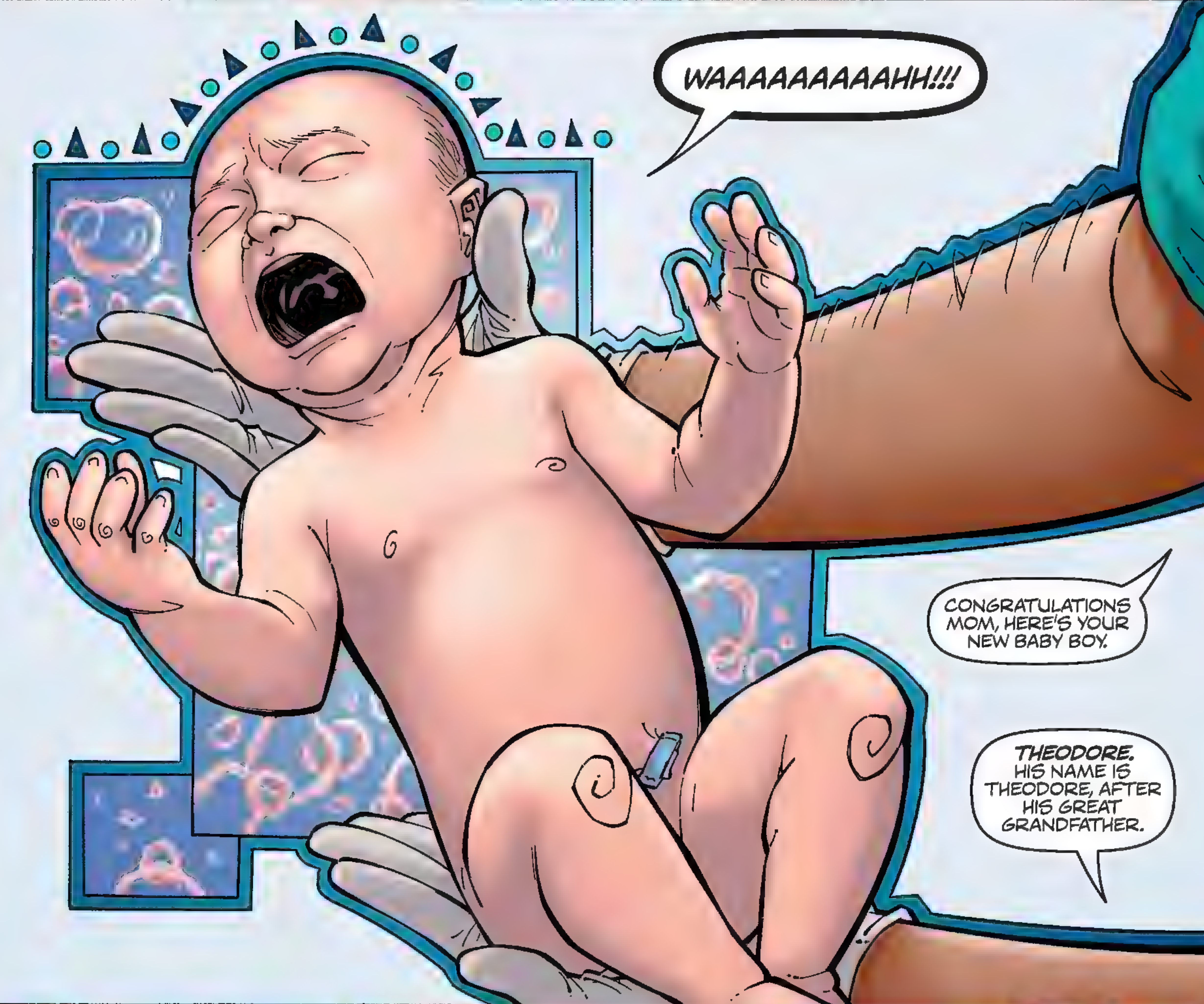








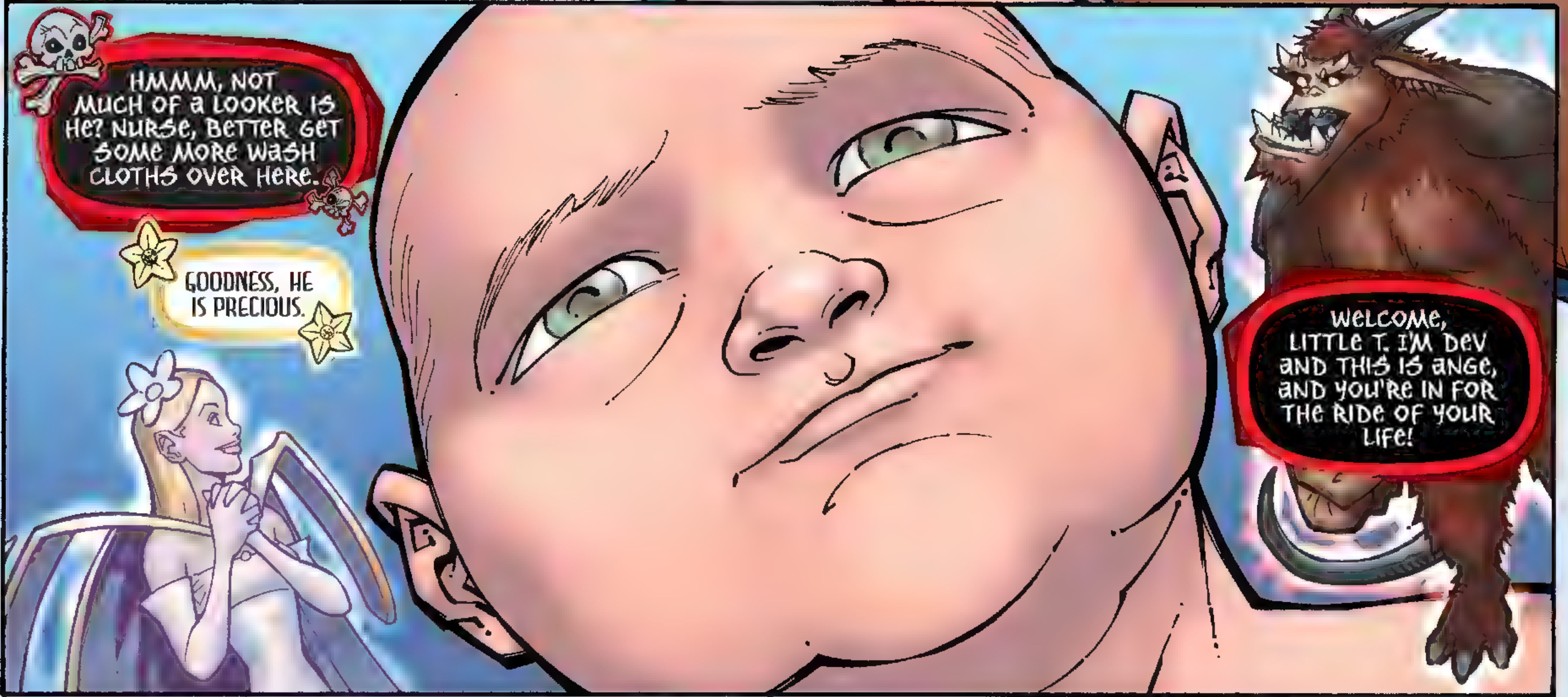
YES, HERE'S THE CROWN OF THE HEAD. OK, ON THE NEXT CONTRACTION, ONE MORE DEEP BREATH AND PUSH. ALRIGHT, HOLD IT, HOLD IT, HERE ARE THE SHOULDERS. I'VE GOT YA, I'VE GOT YA.



WAAAAAAAAAAHH!!!

CONGRATULATIONS MOM, HERE'S YOUR NEW BABY BOY.

**THEODORE.** HIS NAME IS THEODORE, AFTER HIS GREAT GRANDFATHER.



HMMM, NOT MUCH OF A LOOKER IS HE? NURSE, BETTER GET SOME MORE WASH CLOTHS OVER HERE.

GOODNESS, HE IS PRECIOUS.

WELCOME, LITTLE T. I'M DEV AND THIS IS ANGE, AND YOU'RE IN FOR THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE!



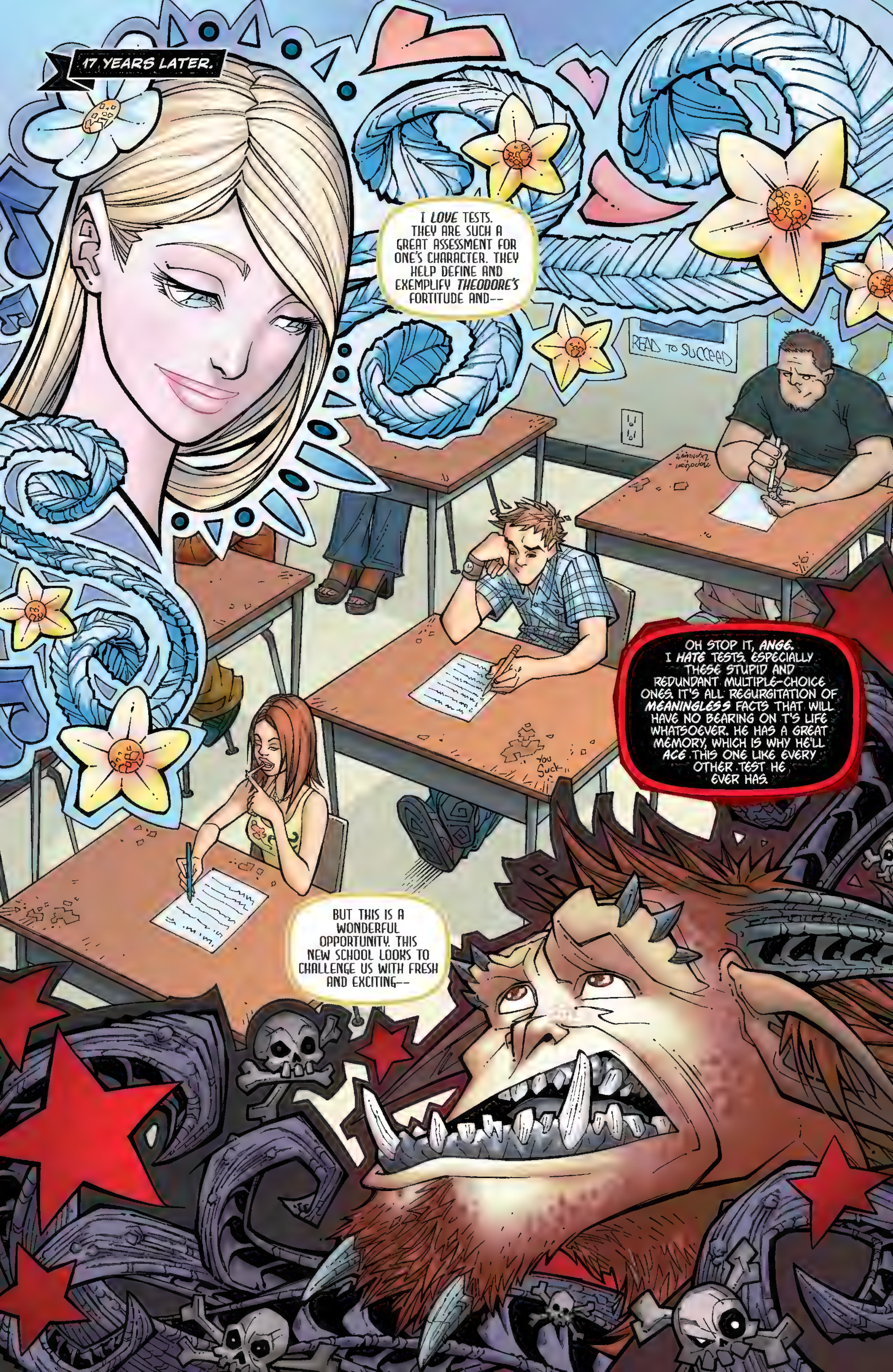
17 YEARS LATER.

I LOVE TESTS. THEY ARE SUCH A GREAT ASSESSMENT FOR ONE'S CHARACTER. THEY HELP DEFINE AND EXEMPLIFY THEODORE'S FORTITUDE AND—

READ TO SUCCEED

OH STOP IT, ANGE. I HATE TESTS, ESPECIALLY THESE STUPID AND REDUNDANT MULTIPLE-CHOICE ONES. IT'S ALL REGURGITATION OF MEANINGLESS FACTS THAT WILL HAVE NO BEARING ON T'S LIFE WHATSOEVER. HE HAS A GREAT MEMORY, WHICH IS WHY HE'LL ACE THIS ONE LIKE EVERY OTHER TEST HE EVER HAS.

BUT THIS IS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY. THIS NEW SCHOOL LOOKS TO CHALLENGE US WITH FRESH AND EXCITING—





TRY TEDIOUS  
AND BORING.

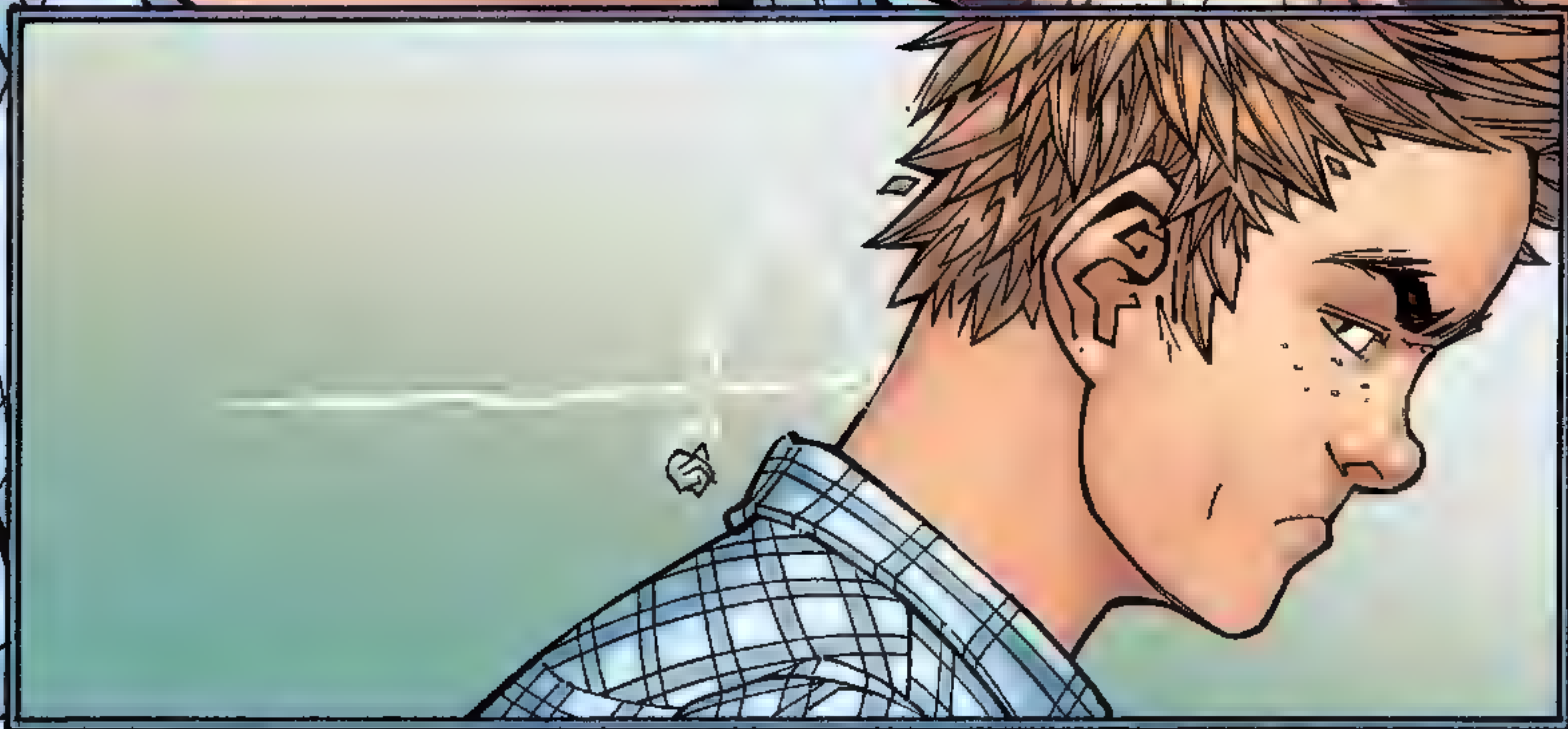
THESE  
EGGHEADS ARE  
HERE BECAUSE  
THEY COULDN'T FIT  
IN WITH NORMAL  
KIDS.

INTELLIGENCE  
IS A TRAIT  
FROWNED UPON BY  
THE POPULAR.

WE ARE POPULAR.  
EVERYONE LIKES  
THEODORE. HE IS THE MOST  
POPULAR KID IN--

EVERYONE  
TOLERATES HIM. WE  
DON'T FIT IN. WE'RE ON  
THE OUTSKIRTS OF EVERY  
GROUP. I THINK HE NEEDS  
TO MAKE A STAND AND  
FIT IN SOMEWHERE.

WELL FOR NOW  
DEV, I THINK WE NEED  
TO CONCENTRATE ON THIS  
TEST. WE ONLY HAVE TEN  
MINUTES LEFT AND--





NOW THIS IS A TEST!

OK THEO, TURN AROUND AND BELT THAT LITTLE TURD RIGHT IN THE KISSER. AND WHEN HE HITS THE GROUND, GRAB THAT ABSURDLY BIG BIOLOGY BOOK AND--

IF SHE'S CONCENTRATING ON HER TEST SO HARD, WHY IS SHE LOOKING AT T? C'MON YOU SLY DOG. GIVE HER A WINK.

NOW THEODORE, YOU WILL DO NOTHING OF THE SORT. HE IS THE ONE IN CONTROL OF HIS EMOTIONS, AND HE WILL CONCENTRATE ON HIS TEST. JUST LIKE KIORI--

THAT'S IMPOLITE AND TOO AGGRESSIVE. GIRLS WANT TO BE ROMANCED AND--

NO. GIRLS WANT ASSERTIVENESS. COME ON AND WINK. DO IT. SHE'LL LIKE IT.

I TOLD YOU, HE IS IN CONTROL. LET'S GET BACK TO THE TEST. OR NOW, THE MITOCHONDRIA DO WHAT FUNCTION FOR THE CELL? A... B, C, OR D?

I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT A FREAKIN' MITOCHONDRIA IS GONNA DO TO THAT LAME ASS BEHIND US! COME ON! GET UP AND SOCK HIM IN THE GRILL!

THERE YA GO!

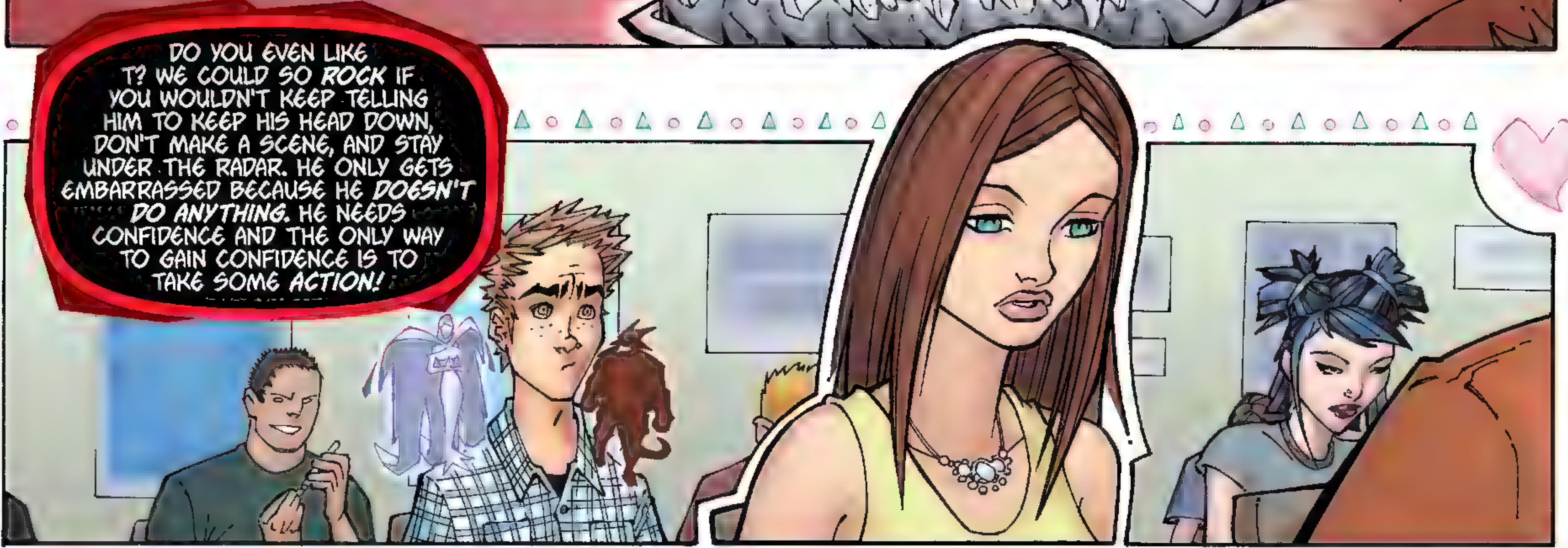
WAIT... CALM... WAIT. KIORI WILL THINK YOU ARE--



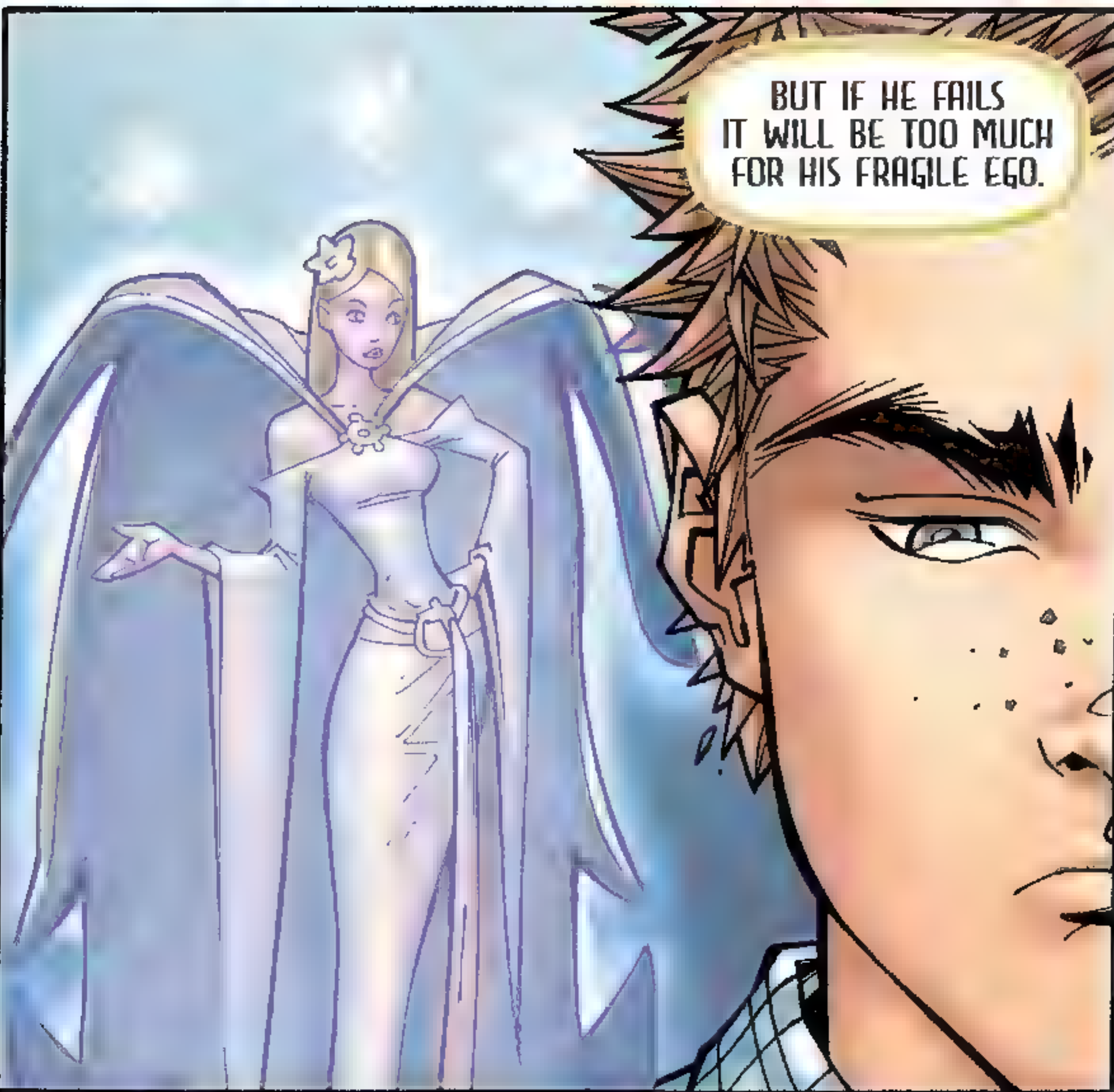


A MAN! COME ON KID! I'M REALLY GETTING TIRED OF THIS. YOU ARE GONNA HAVE TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF. EVEN CARRIE WILL THINK YOU ARE COOL. DO IT KID.

CARRIE IS A LITTLE OUT OF OUR LEAGUE. SHE IS--



DO YOU EVEN LIKE T? WE COULD SO ROCK IF YOU WOULDN'T KEEP TELLING HIM TO KEEP HIS HEAD DOWN, DON'T MAKE A SCENE, AND STAY UNDER THE RADAR. HE ONLY GETS EMBARRASSED BECAUSE HE DOESN'T DO ANYTHING. HE NEEDS CONFIDENCE AND THE ONLY WAY TO GAIN CONFIDENCE IS TO TAKE SOME ACTION!

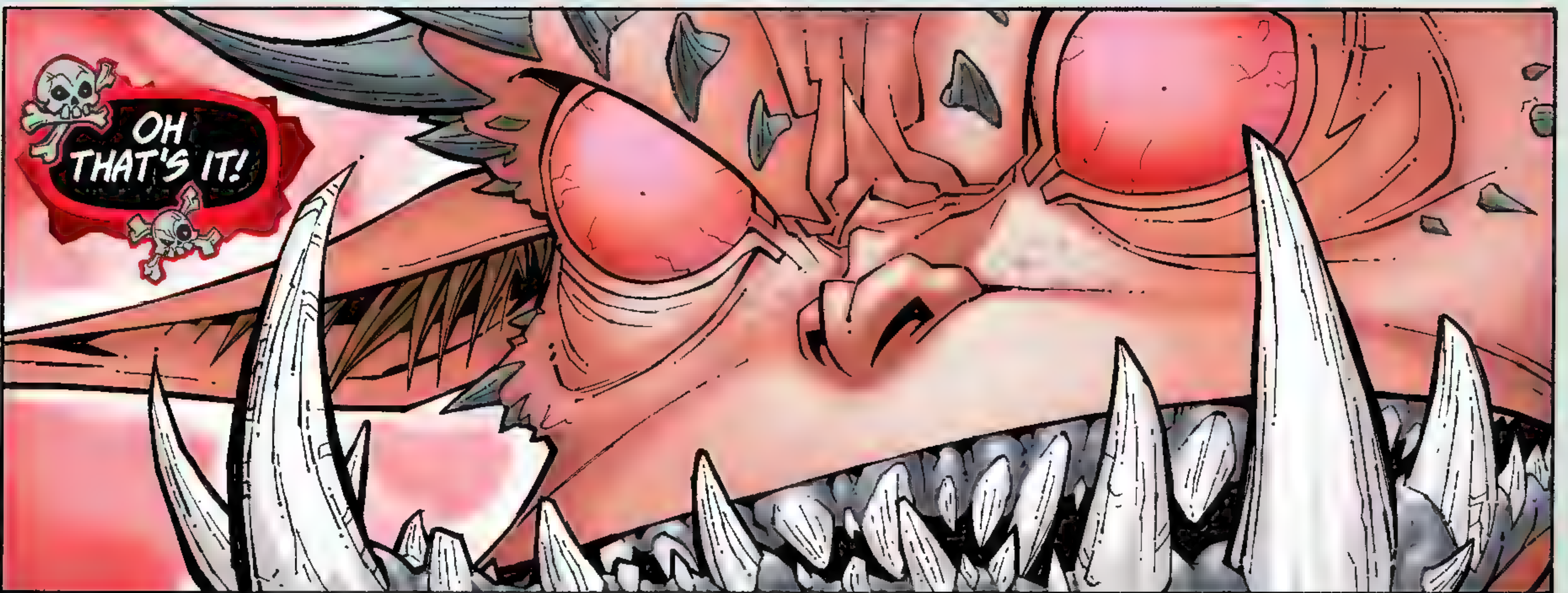
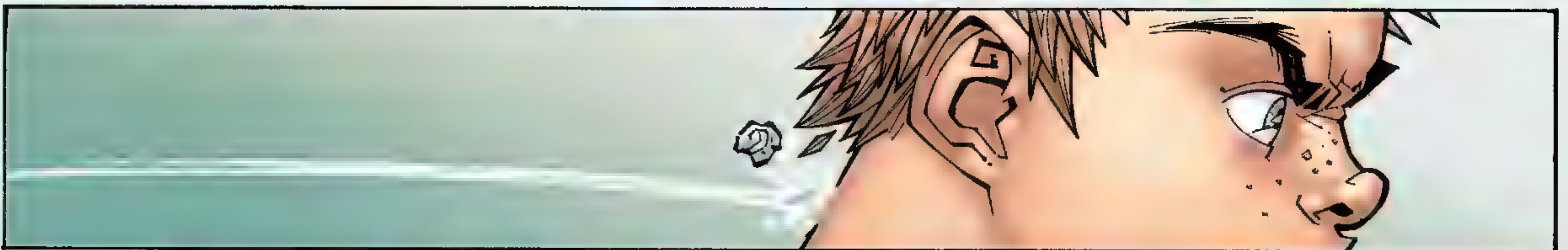


BUT IF HE FAILS IT WILL BE TOO MUCH FOR HIS FRAGILE EGO.



THE ONLY REASON IT IS FRAGILE IS BECAUSE HE LISTENS TO YOU TOO MUCH! AND FAILING IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO LEARN.

HOW DO YOU EXPECT HIM TO EVER GAIN ANY EXPERIENCE IF HE NEVER TRIES?



OH THAT'S IT!





WHAT DID YOU JUST DO?!!?

I... UH... I'M NOT SURE.

HOW DID YOU DO THAT? YOU KNOW YOU CANNOT BE SEEN. WE ARE ONLY HERE FOR GUIDANCE AND PERSPECTIVE.... NOT...

I DON'T KNOW, OK!?! I FEEL... WEIRD. I'VE NEVER FELT THAT BEFORE. IT WAS AMAZING! I ACTUALLY GOT A REACTION FROM SOMEONE.

I'M SO USED TO THE NEVER ENDING FRUSTRATION OF HAVING T NOT LISTEN TO ME... I JUST SNAPPED! I'M NOT SURE HOW I DID IT, BUT I LIKE!

WE HAVE TO FINISH THE TEST! THE BELL IS ABOUT TO RING. WHERE IS HE?





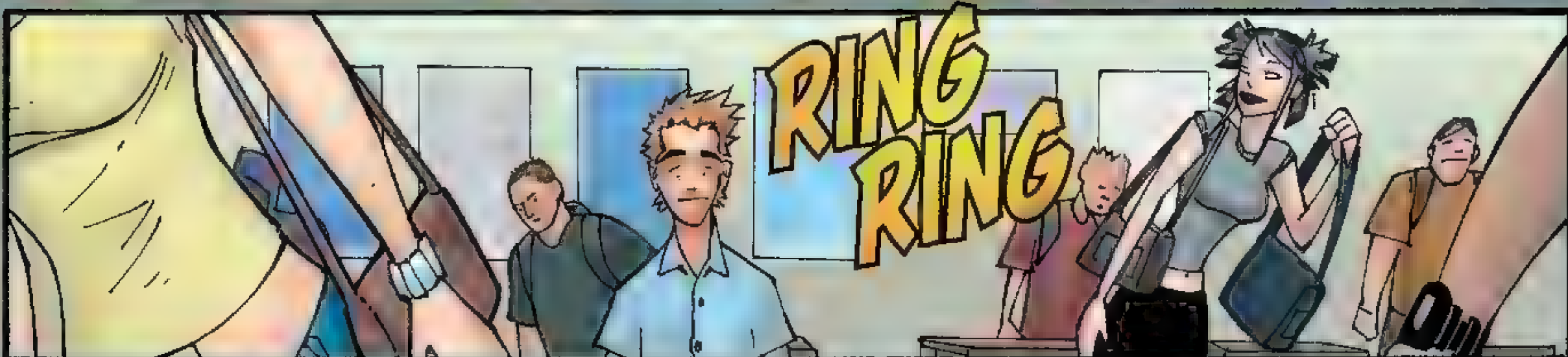
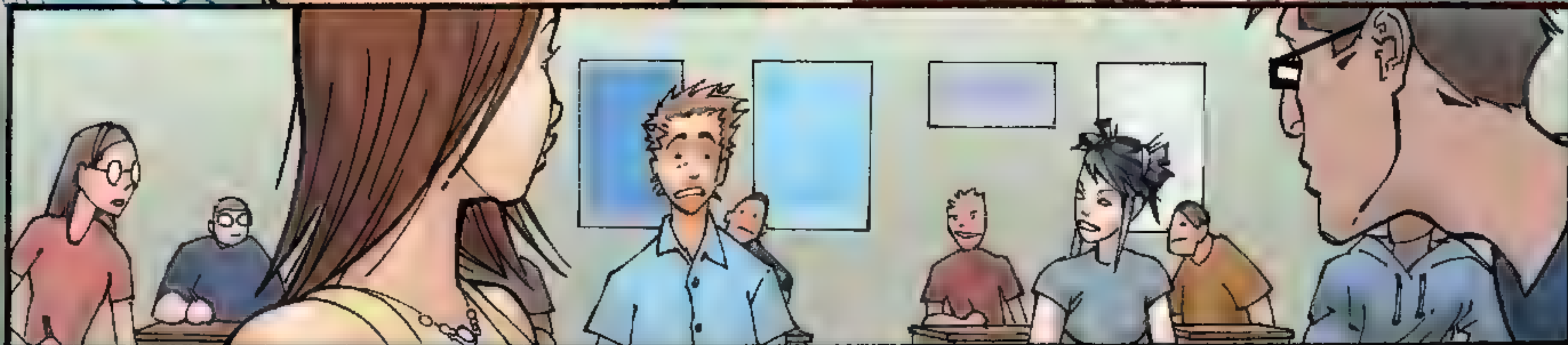
OK KID, IT'S A WHOLE NEW GAME NOW. YOU ARE GOING TO START STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF, OR I'M GOING TO DO IT FOR YOU!

YOU WILL DO NOTHING OF THE SORT.

NOTHING OF THE SORT, NOTHING OF THE SORT...

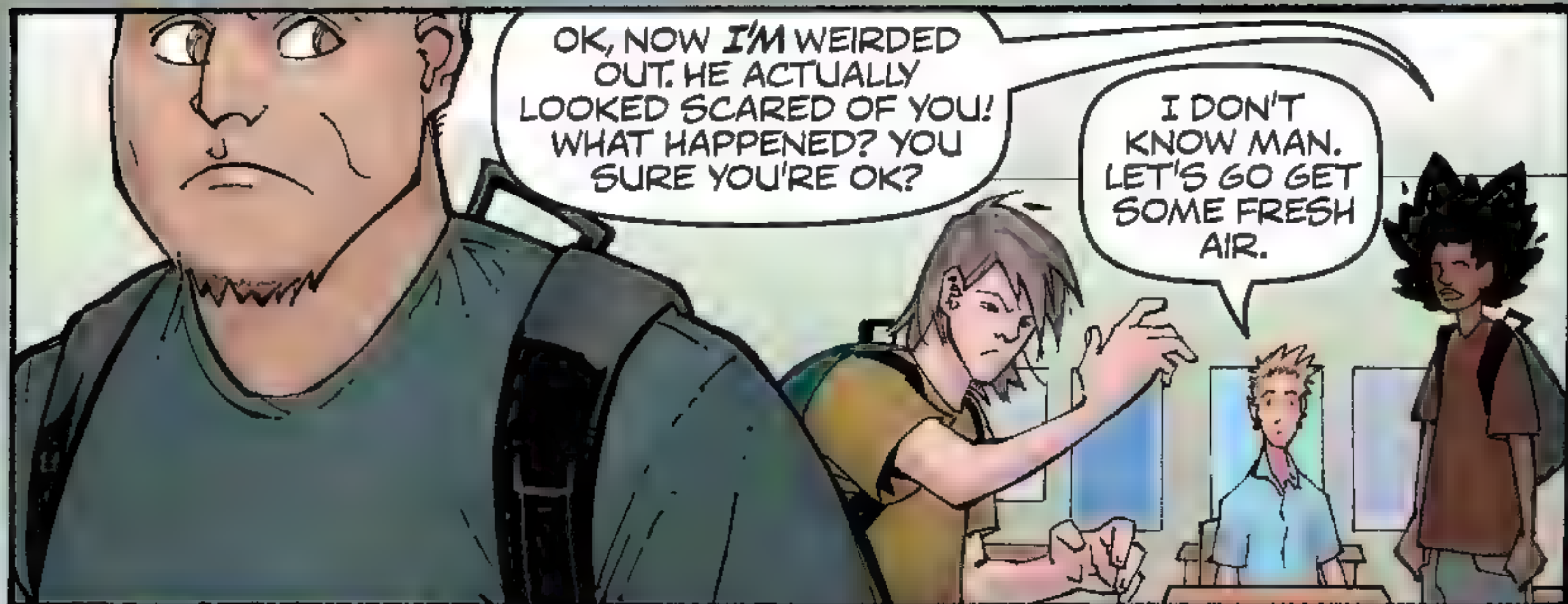


WHO ARE YOU TWO?!



YOU OK?

I'M A LITTLE WEIRDED OUT...



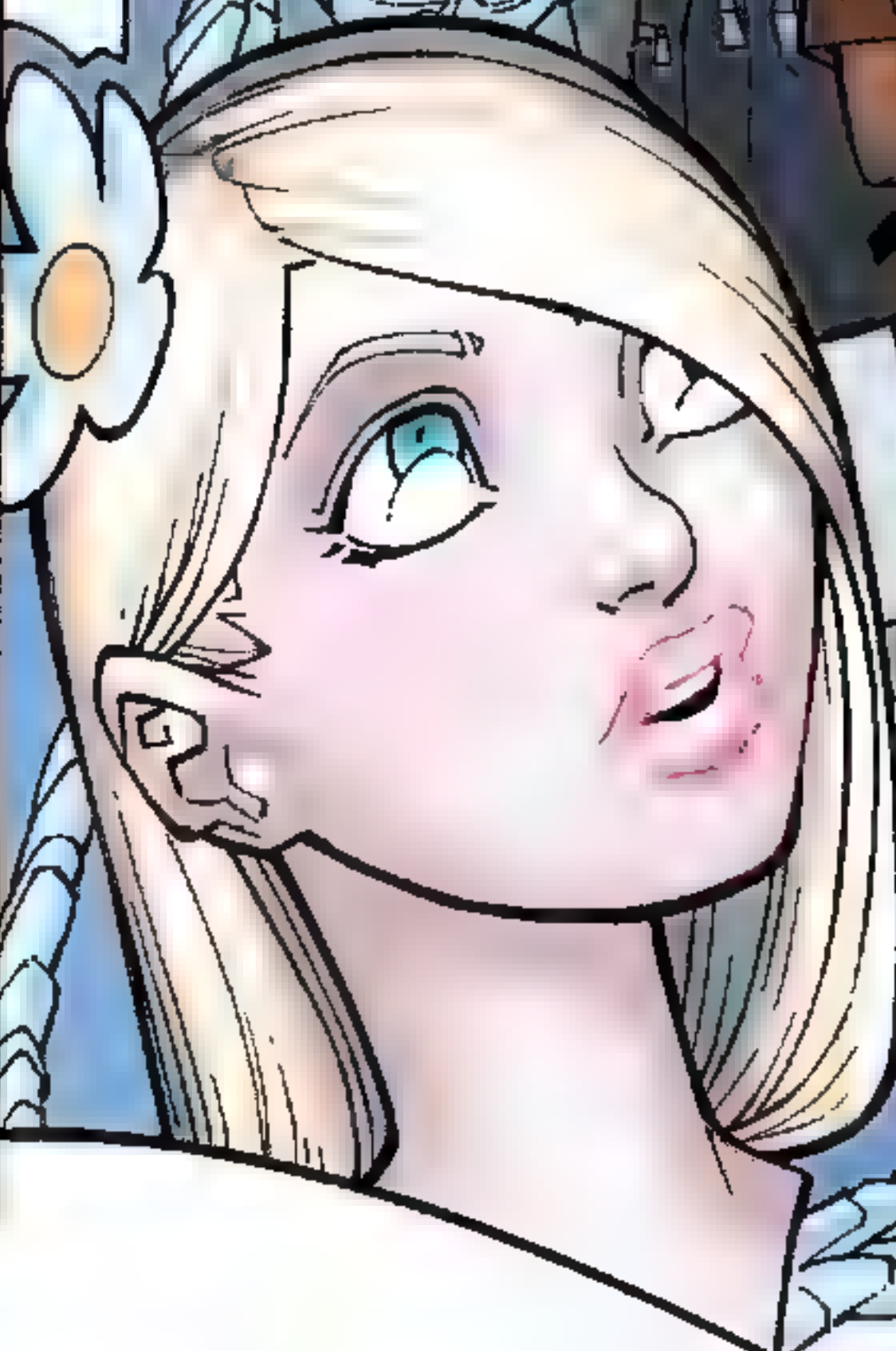
OK, NOW I'M WEIRDED OUT. HE ACTUALLY LOOKED SCARED OF YOU! WHAT HAPPENED? YOU SURE YOU'RE OK?

I DON'T KNOW MAN. LET'S GO GET SOME FRESH AIR.

THE TEST IS OVER. I THINK WE DID RATHER WELL. EVEN AFTER THAT STRANGE EXPERIENCE WE HAD... THAT CERTAINLY WAS ENOUGH EXCITEMENT FOR ONE DAY.

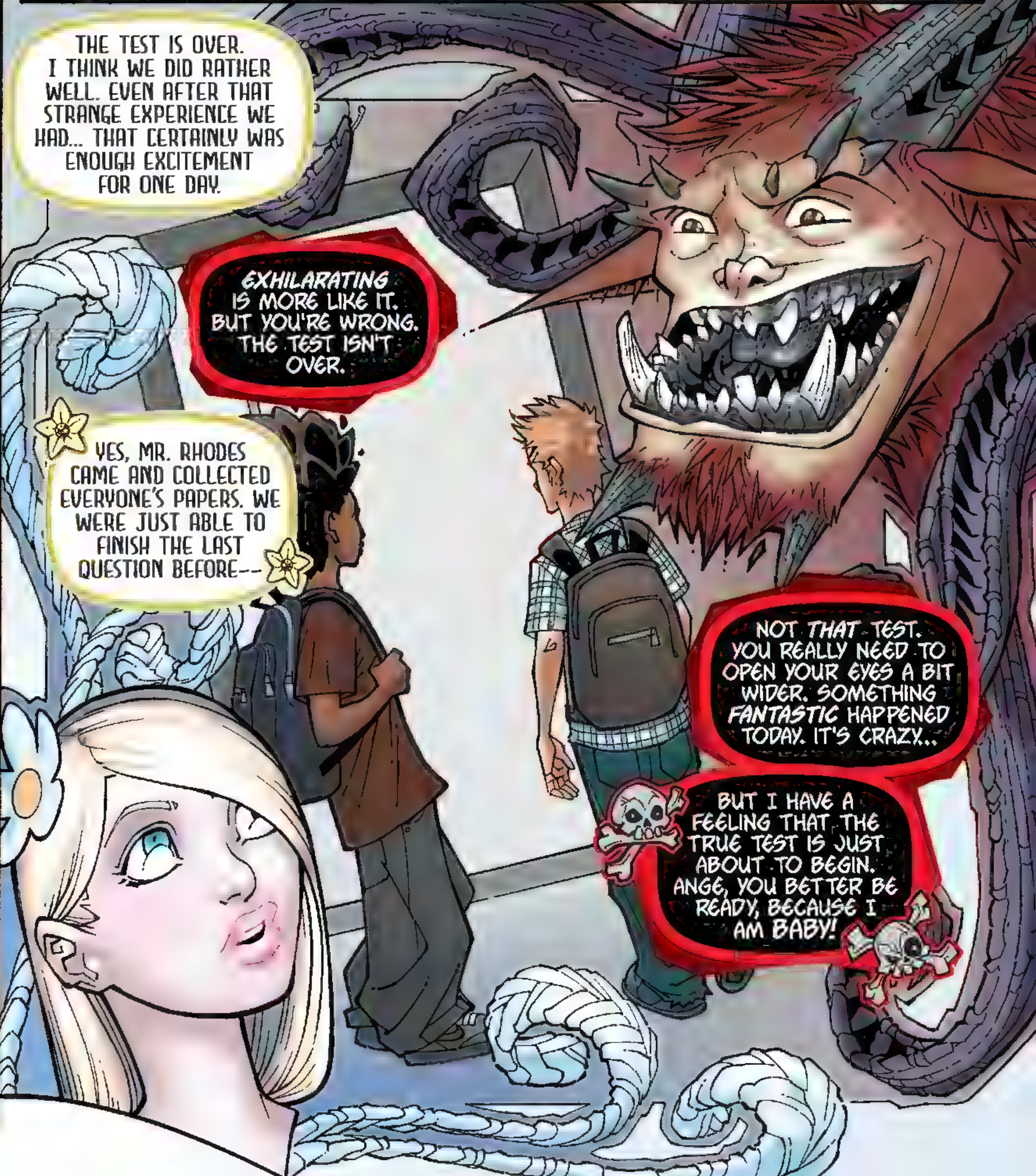
EXHILARATING IS MORE LIKE IT. BUT YOU'RE WRONG. THE TEST ISN'T OVER.

YES, MR. RHODES CAME AND COLLECTED EVERYONE'S PAPERS. WE WERE JUST ABLE TO FINISH THE LAST QUESTION BEFORE--



NOT THAT TEST. YOU REALLY NEED TO OPEN YOUR EYES A BIT WIDER. SOMETHING FANTASTIC HAPPENED TODAY. IT'S CRAZY...

BUT I HAVE A FEELING THAT THE TRUE TEST IS JUST ABOUT TO BEGIN. ANGE, YOU BETTER BE READY, BECAUSE I AM BABY!







MUST HURRY.  
MUST NOT LET THE  
'EXALTED ONE' WAIT.  
ANSWER THE CALL.  
ANSWER THE CALL.



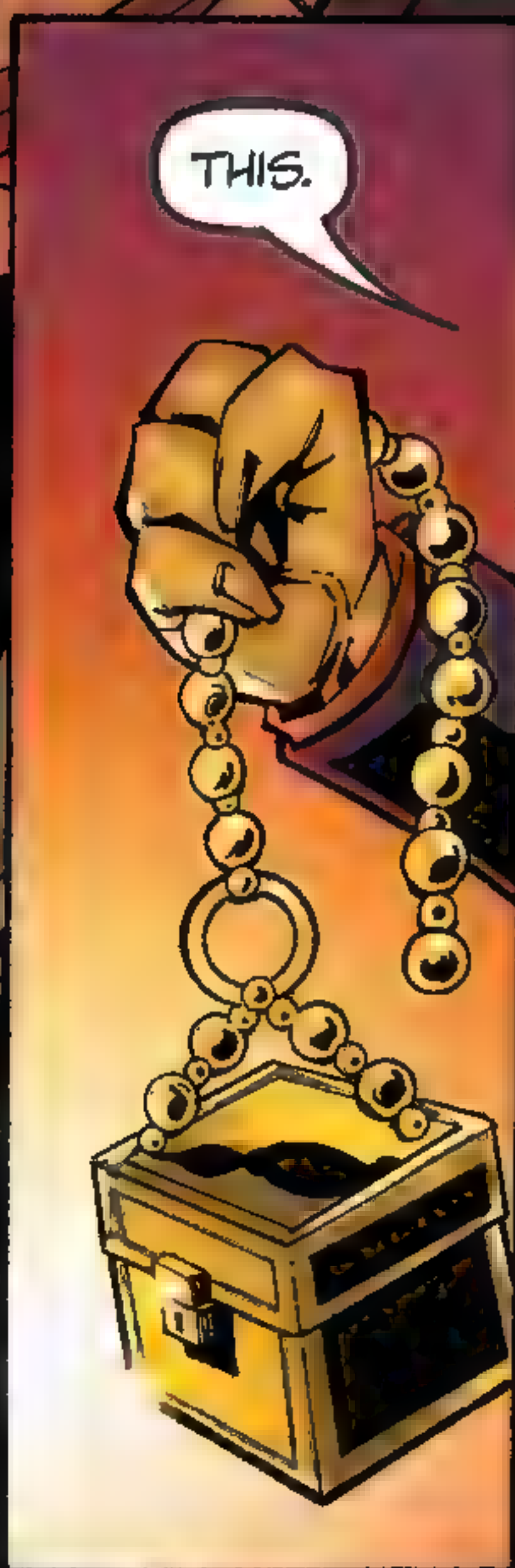
DO WHAT THE  
'EXALTED ONE'  
BECKONS. MUST  
HURRY.



ANSWER  
HER CALL.



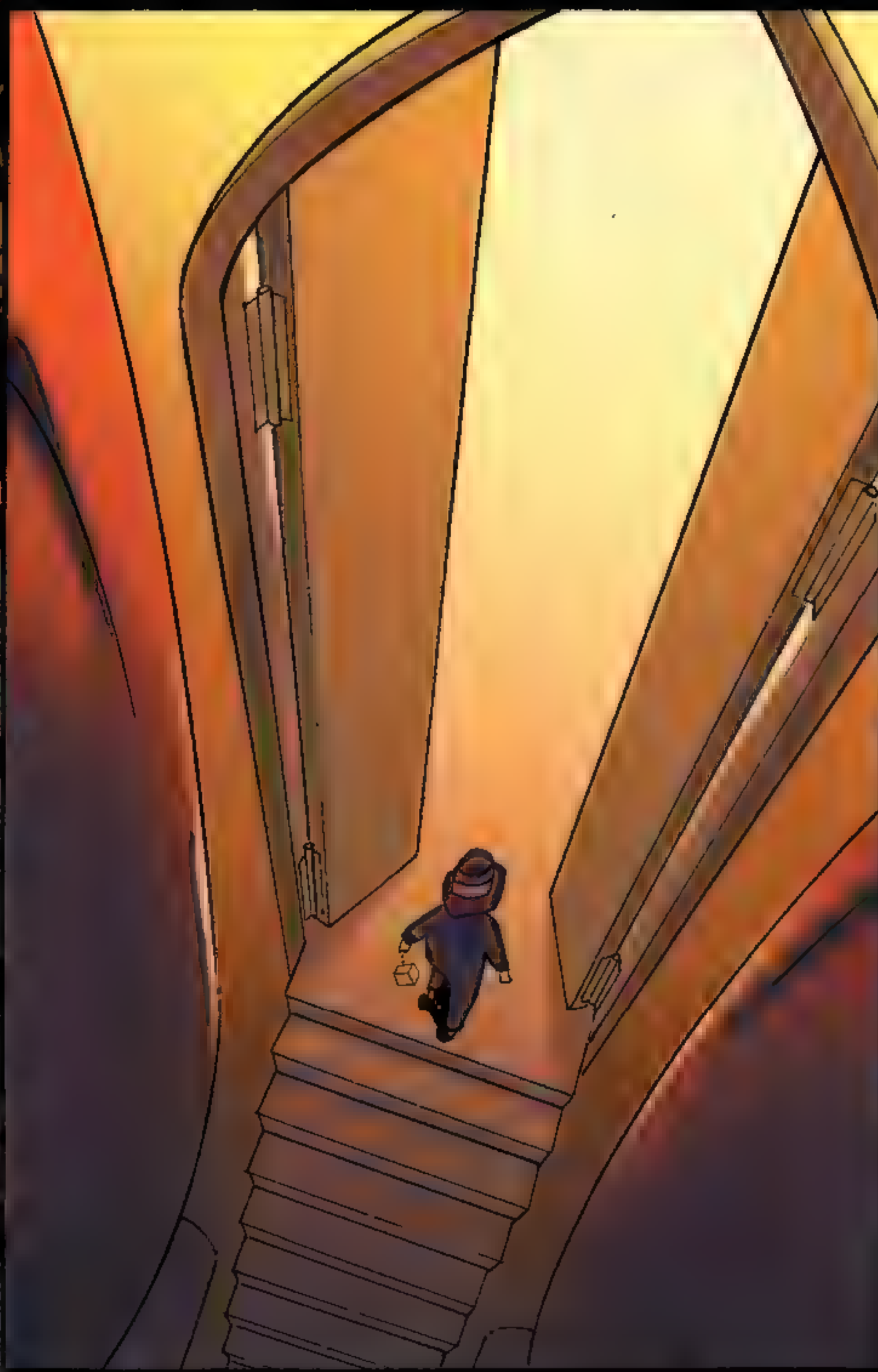
WHAT  
DO YOU  
PRESENT?



THIS.



PROCEED.



MISTRESS,  
I HAVE IT.



IT'S ABOUT  
TIME. THERE IS  
MUCH WORK TO  
BE DONE.

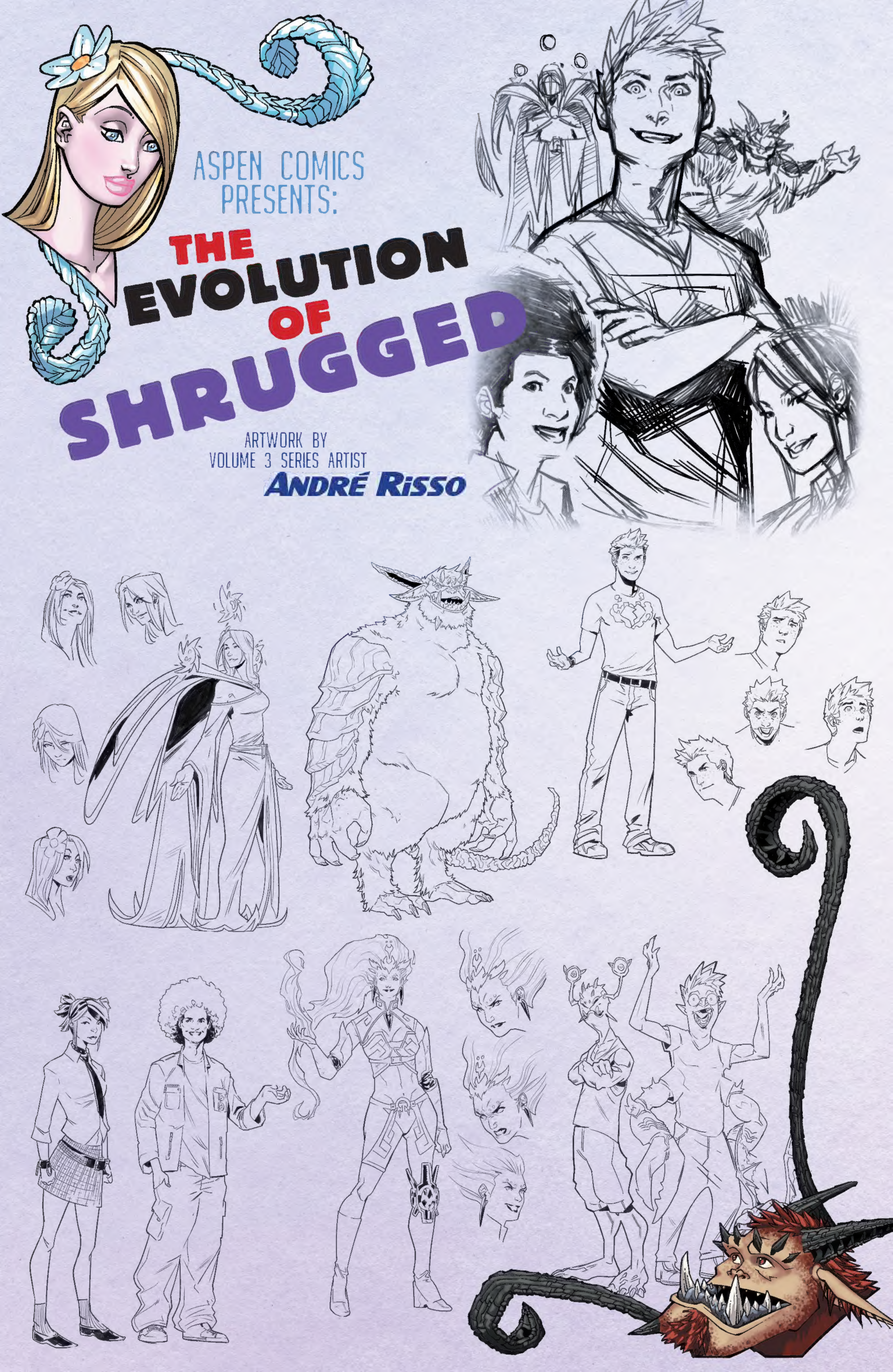


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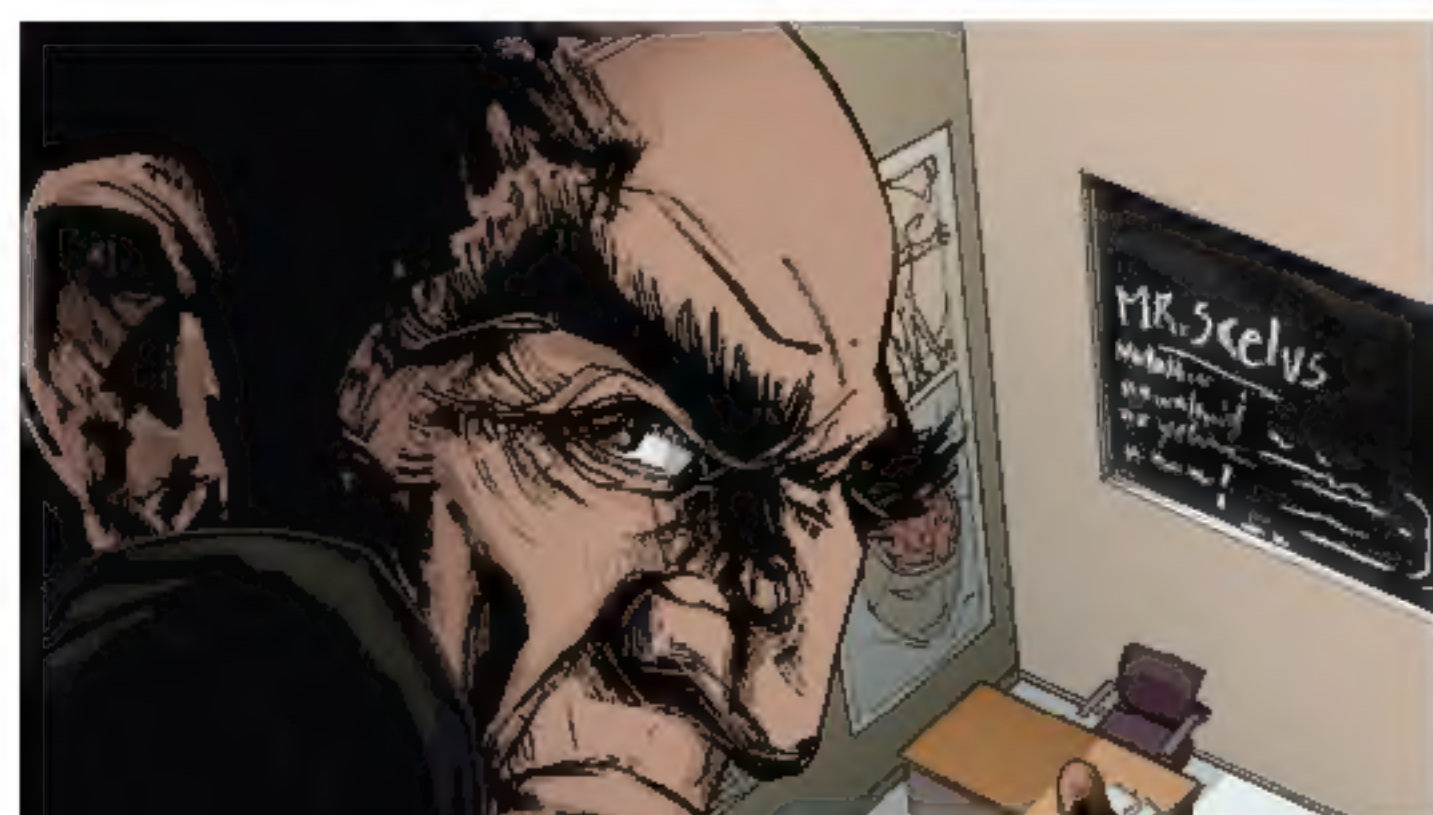
## “New Thing to Fear”

Theo and his close friends, Thom and Kiori, returned from summer vacation to Maxwell High along with old and new classmates alike, such as their oddball pal, Karate Joe, and the new heartthrob girl in school, Lou. Things were looking up for the optimistic trio of kids.

Meanwhile, in Perspecta on the Elysian side of the wall, the newly appointed Leader Magnuss and Councilor Marina found their own hope in the mutual re-building of the Transferring Chamber by both the Elysians and the Nefarians. However, they failed to see the impending invasion by the heinous Slive, and the advancing Fear Creatures.

Back on Earth, Theo discovered the new school year would bring new challenges, including a rather ominous Pre-Psych teacher, Mr. Scelus. With “anxiety” the topic at hand, Ange and Dev found themselves at odds once again, with Theo left to experience his own anxious feelings with his unusual instructor.

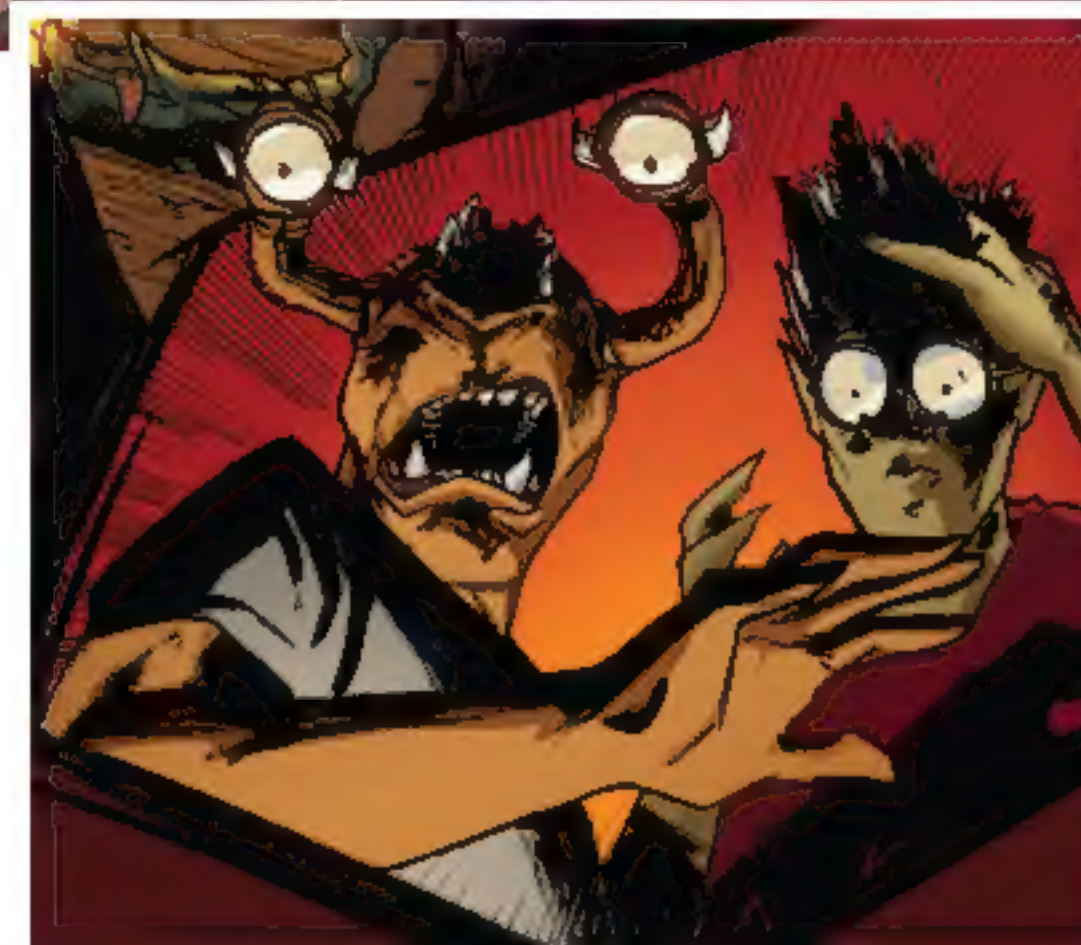
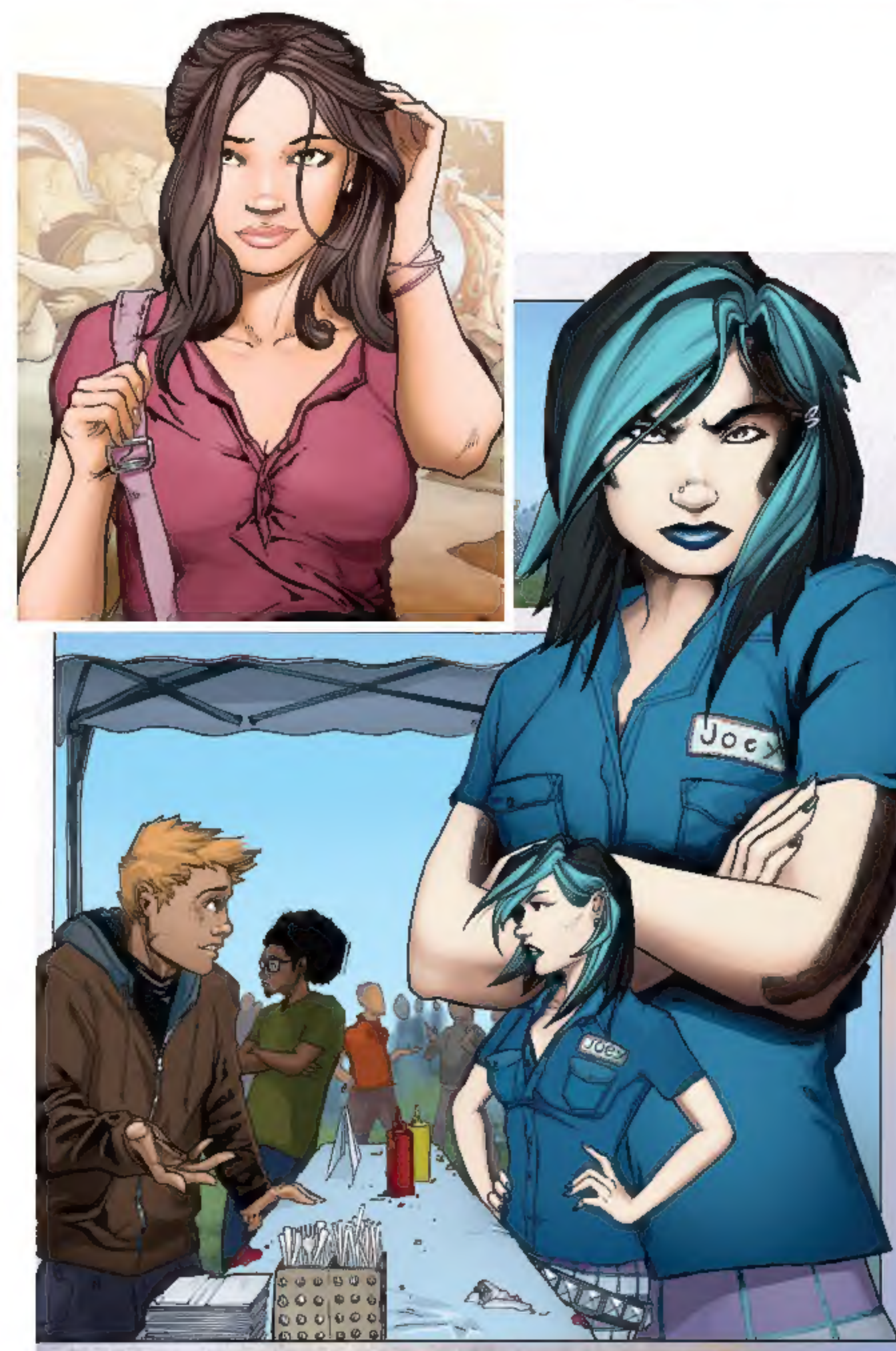
In Nefario at the local fire pit, a group of unlucky Nefarians suffered the first attack by the Fear Creatures, as they were torn to shreds. Dev’s allies in Nefario, Flobart, Goo, Snoof and Grap discovered the scene, much to their horror.



At the high school football game, Theo came to realize that making new female friends such as Lou, as well as Carrie, came with its own consequences, as his unintentional actions quickly alienated Kiori.



At the Elysian Meeting Chamber, Magnuss attempted to quell the rising tension following the recent attacks, yet nothing would prepare them for the sudden ambush on the chamber itself. Slive had completed his total conquest of Perspecta—and now set his sights on the Transferring Chamber and Earth.



the one who saved him and would help the teenager come to grips with his role in saving Perspecta. Traversing through a deeply shrouded area of Perspecta seen by only a scant handful of beings, Theo soon found himself supercharged with the embodiment of true courage, and ready to fight.

Meanwhile, at the direction of Ember, the rest of the gang made their way through the demolished passageways of Perspecta...and walked directly into a trap - Slive and his army of Fear Creatures. Revealing that it was her plan all along, Ember was ready to finally finish what she started by taking out the kids, along with Ange and Dev, but the group was suddenly rescued by the arrival of the newly powered-up Theo.

Using his courage powers to infuse all of his allies, they utilized their combined might to defeat Ember, Slive and the Fear Creatures, but were collectively not enough to hold her there. However, Magnuss and his Elysian colleagues soon arrived to even the odds. Magnuss and Marina laid judgment upon Ember, abolishing her bodily possession in the process.

With Perspecta saved, Theo and his friends returned home to their high school life, as the young teen prepared himself for a very special date...



In his home, while playing video games with Thom and Kiori, Theo suddenly experienced a pain unlike anything he'd ever felt, and much to the dismay of his friends, unleashed fear-corrupted versions of Ange and Dev.

Lou would later arrive at Theo's house to study for their lab test but instead discovered the trio of teens at the mercy of Ange and Dev's new deviant forms. The group tried their best to fight off the pair, but were nearly killed before being rescued by none other than the villainous Ember Silva. Ange and Dev attempted to take her out, but Ember used her powers of fire to scorch the Fear Creature's infection from them, releasing their true forms into Theo's world. After finding Carrie at the request of Silva, the group soon traveled back to Perspecta.

Upon their return, Theo and his pals thought they were surrounded by the Fear Creatures and were ready for another fight. However, Kirialla, the leader of the butterflies swooped in to halt Theo, as their foes turned out to be Nefarian refugees in hiding, in addition to the unpredictable What-If-Mafia. Using some rather large Nefarian muscle and Kirialla's ability of flight, Theo was able to evade an incoming array of Fear Creatures and escape, but was soon knocked out of her grasp and fell from the sky.

Theo would awaken to the voice of Magnuss, the one who saved him and would help the teenager come to grips with his role in saving Perspecta. Traversing through a deeply shrouded area of Perspecta seen by only a scant handful of beings, Theo soon found himself supercharged with the embodiment of true courage, and ready to fight.



Read the entire story in Shrugged Volume 2  
“New Thing to Fear” TPB available in stores now!



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# SHRUGGED<sup>3</sup>

# #1

ON  
SALE  
NOW!

**Yes or No? Right or Wrong?**  
**Whatever the choice, Theo Langstrom and the**  
**literal "voices" inside his head are back to face their**  
**greatest challenge yet in the all new third volume!**



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*R*  
Sotelo